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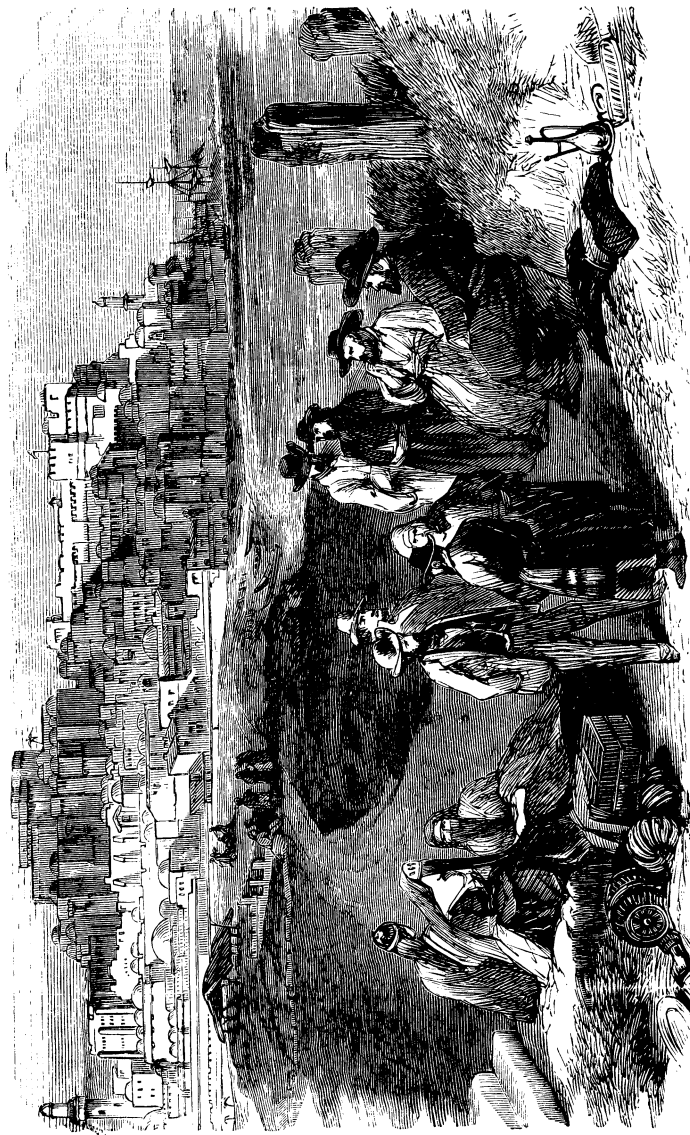
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p. 202.

ZOPPA.  
FRONTSTIEGE.

Jacobs' Aet's.

NOTES,  
CRITICAL AND EXPLANATORY,  
ON THE  
ACTS OF THE APOSTLES,

BY  
MELANCTHON W. JACOBUS,  
PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE, &c. IN THE WESTERN THEOLOGICAL  
SEMINARY AT ALLEGHENY CITY, PA.

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## PREFACE.

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IT has been the aim of the Author, which he has cherished and prosecuted during several years past, to present, in a single volume, for popular use, an Exposition of "The Acts."

He has been aware of a very general desire, among Bible readers, to study this book with the aid of a manual commentary that should embody the most valuable results of investigation. And he has had some reason to believe that notwithstanding the important aids lately furnished, there remained something to do for the elucidation of the history on the plan which he has here pursued.

The method adopted by the Author in the other Historical Books, is much more advantageous in this—namely, to arrange the materials under appropriate headings throughout, so as to call attention, all along, to the points and periods of the history, and then to group together all these headings in a Synoptical view. Thus there is presented to the eye at once a comprehensive Outline, by the aid of which the separate epochs and progressive stages of the History may be viewed in their proper relations.

For lack of this aid, many cursory readers have not yet understood that the History in this book extends through a period of *thirty-two, or three years*—equal in extent to the time covered by the Gospel History, and embracing the second *third part* of the century, as the Gospel history embraces the first third. Nor is it likely to be seen, without some such tabular view, how the History in "The Acts" covers the times and circumstances in which the Epistles of Paul were written. For this reason the author has believed an important end would be gained by incorporating, at the time and place where they belong, (so nearly as can be ascertained,) the briefest notices of the several Epistles of Paul. Indeed this has seemed necessary for a proper comprehension of the whole. These Letters are indeed among *the Acts of the Apostles*, and light is often thrown upon them by bringing to view their connections with the Narrative. Though the chronology of some of them, especially of the Pastoral Epistles, is not positively fixed, yet it is quite sufficiently established for this purpose. The facts scattered through the Epistles are necessary for a thorough understanding of "the Acts." And as the Epistles are not arranged in their chronological order, in our common version, and as the Holy Spirit had a plan, doubtless, in the very order in which these Inspired Books were put in circulation, we cannot doubt that the method adopted will conduce greatly to a proper understanding of the New Testament. Especially the interest which the

Author's own classes have expressed in this mode of studying the Acts, has encouraged him to present it in this popular form.

As the only Inspired History of the New Testament Church is here given, it becomes most deeply interesting and useful to Christians of all time to mark the great principles here illustrated—to observe the true nature of Christ's Kingdom, as here set forth, and to note the true Idea of the Church, and the law of its progress.

Here is the illustration of those Parables which our Blessed Lord spake about the Kingdom of God. Here we see that Christianity is not a development of Judaism any more than a material substance is the development of its shadow; while yet we find here the occasions and steps by which the true Doctrine and Polity of the Christian Church are brought to view by the Spirit of God for our teaching in all time. This development within the sphere of the Inspired History, is our authority in all the interests of Christ's Kingdom, for the extension of the same Church until it shall cover the whole earth. Its rapid progress in Apostolic times against all opposition, so that during these few years it had reached the chief seats of power and learning, and had already, in miniature, made the conquest of the world, stands an indisputable proof of its Divine origin. The documents which narrate the facts are amply attested. And Christianity has thus a historical basis, independently of any questions peculiar to itself. It comes attested to us *as a supernatural system*—its first grand event—THE INCARNATION, on which indeed it is based—being a MIRACLE, yet a HISTORICAL FACT, as much as any other which is found on record in the annals of History.

The important use of this Book to the Church in all time cannot be over-rated. Take, for example, the *First Revival*. It is the pattern for all Revivals of the true Religion. There is still the same command of Christ to "wait for the Promise" already given—the Promise of the Father. There must be PRAYER—*specific prayer—concerted prayer—continuous prayer—believing prayer—pleading the promise*. And these are the conditions, not *upon* which, but *in* which, the blessing comes down. Always the outpouring results directly from the Exaltation and Glorification of the Crucified Jesus. So also the *History of Prayer*, as found in these Inspired Annals, becomes most interesting and needful to be studied as a guide for every period of the Church.

Here we have the Prayer of the Church for the promised Baptism of the Spirit, (ch. 1 : 14,)—Prayer as a stated Ordinance of the Church, (ch. 2 : 42,)—Prayer for Deliverance from Persecutors, (ch. 4 : 24,)—Prayer for an individual, (for Peter in prison, ch. 12 : 5,)—Prayer in the Commissioning of Missionaries, (ch. 13 : 3,) &c.

The History also of the Church's progress—of the Domestic and the Foreign work—of the active and successful publishing of the Gospel by the private membership—of the appointment of Missionaries to the Heathen, and of their efficient operations in such various communities—are so many chapters for every age of the Church.

## PREFACE.

It will be found, also, that the *Household Covenant* has great prominence in the History.

*The Christian Life*, also, as here given, is most instructive—in which *Beneficence* is a leading feature—no occasional, incidental thing, but a part of the worship and of the fellowship,—incorporated with all the Christian living, and with all the service of Christ's House.

The Author has felt it his duty and privilege to make free use of all the helps at hand; and he hereby acknowledges his indebtedness, in greater or less degree, to them all. The most recent work of his learned and excellent friend and former Preceptor, Dr. J. ADDISON ALEXANDER, is one of those numerous and valuable aids which have been constantly before him. And in addition to all the ordinary sources, have been the Author's personal observations of Biblical places, which the reader will find embodied in the Notes. Wherever it has served to throw light upon the passage, the most literal translation has been given of the Greek text, so as to furnish to the common reader the full benefit of the original. This has been done in a way to avoid such minute verbal criticism as would confuse the continuous reading. Accordingly the *paraphrase* form has frequently been used, as the most direct method, and producing the least interruption.

The MAP, which seems so necessary for the study of this Book, is drawn on stone from a most recent and well-corrected English copy. The ILLUSTRATIONS are abundant and of superior execution, such as will make the volume most useful to the many readers in Families, Schools, and Bible Classes, who desire the amplest helps. Some of these are from *Dr. Thomson's* late work, "*The Land and the Book*," verified also by the Author's own observations, in his Travels through the Lands of the Bible.

And now, in issuing this fourth volume of the *Notes on the New Testament*, completing the Historical Books, all thanks are due to God, with the encouraging hope that this may find its way into as many hands, and repay the labor by as many testimonies as the "*Notes on the Gospels*" have done.

ALLEGHENY, April 15th, 1859.





# INTRODUCTION

## TO THE

### ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

#### AUTHOR, OBJECT, &c.

**THE** Authorship of this Book is indicated by the introductory address. **The** writer refers to a *former treatise*, or **BOOK I.** of the History. And we recognize at once "the Gospel by Luke," as that to which he refers. That Gospel narrative was addressed to this same Theophilus. And among the Evangelists, Luke was that one whose aim agrees most entirely with the object plainly contemplated in this **BOOK II.** of the History. We have seen that he writes his "former treatise" in the spirit of that *world-wide Gospel* which Paul preached—and that he wrote it under the eye of Paul; so that it has borne the name of the Pauline Gospel. Here, now, he undertakes to show the steps by which the good tidings designed for all nations went abroad to the Jews and Gentiles. In this **BOOK II.** then, we have the great opening *Chapters of Church History*. And, as Steir has well remarked, "Luke shows that a true Church history can be comprehended only out of a true Life of Christ, as the Gospels give it." See "*Notes on Mark and Luke*"—*Introduction to Luke*.

The Historian indicates his Object and Plan in the opening verses of this Book. He states distinctly that he wrote the Gospel History as a summary narrative of the Life of Jesus, until the *Ascension*. But he notes here at once, as important for his present purpose, the Period of the Forty Days. And here he introduces the theme of our Lord's conversation and instructions, as it is also his own theme in this Outline History of the Primitive Church, or *Kingdom of God*.

This *Kingdom* had been constantly set forth by our Lord to His Disciples—in parables and arguments, laboring to show its essential nature, its mode of extension, and its predicted progress and consummation. This is that which John the Baptist and Jesus Himself announced as at hand—which Christ so variously explained, as the seed secretly growing up, (Mark 4:26;) the mustard seed, the leaven, &c. (Matt. 13:33;) as coming not with observation, (Luke 17:20;) which is preached since John's time, and *every man* presseth into it, (Luke 16:16;) whose membership is of such as little children, (Matt. 19:14;) which cannot be entered into except a man be born again, (John 3:3;) and which Christ forewarned the Jews should be taken from them and given to the nation bringing forth the fruits thereof, (Matt. 21:43.)

Accordingly Luke tells us that the theme of Christ's instructions to His Disciples in his Resurrection flesh, during the Forty Days interval, was still the Kingdom of God, (vs. 3.) It was precisely in furtherance of these doctrinal instructions that He commanded them to wait at Jerusalem for the Promise of the Father—which, as had been declared by John the Baptist and by Himself also, was the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. That was the Ascension Gift which resulted immediately from His Glorification, (John 7:39,) and this was to result at once in the diffusion of the Gospel to representatives of all lands, ch. 2:5.

This, therefore, is the natural Introduction of Luke's History, in which he puts forward the vital question of the Disciples to our Lord in regard to the time for restoring again *the kingdom* to Israel. And the answer of the Great Head of the Church is the key to Luke's plan. He relates THE FOUNDING AND EXTENSION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH UNDER THE DISPENSATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—according to the promise of Christ, "YE SHALL BE WITNESSES UNTO ME BOTH IN JERUSALEM AND IN ALL JUDEA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH," (vs. 8.)

We see in this light how the Book before us has been regarded by some as a History of the Spirit's work, and by others as "the acts" or doings of the Risen Lord; and how others have entitled it "the Gospel of the Holy Ghost." It is, indeed, all of these together.

In accordance with Luke's plan, as above noted, we find this Apostolic History dividing itself, naturally, into THREE BOOKS. First of all we are introduced to BOOK I.—THE CHURCH AMONG THE JEWS.

This appears, originally, as that small membership of the ancient Jewish Church which had embraced the doctrine and hope of Christ Jesus, and which thus became the *Nucleus* in the formation of the Christian Church. The "*Forty Days*" period after the Resurrection had been spent by our Lord in more fully expounding to these Disciples of the ancient covenant the true idea of the Church in its New dispensation. The preliminaries to the glorious development now at hand, are concerted and continuous PRAYER, with the transaction of such Church business as related to supplying a vacancy in the Apostleship. And then we have

(Part I.) THE FOUNDING AND MANIFESTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, (chs. 1, 2.) Here occurs the ADVENT OF THE SPIRIT in the fullness of time, at the first Christian *Pentecost*. The "Gift of Tongues" is a miraculous sign of what is to be accomplished among all people—the universal promulgation of the Gospel.

This introduces us, naturally, to THE FIRST THINGS of the New Testament economy—the FIRST PREACHING of the Apostles, &c., as the step by which we are brought to

(Part II.) THE SPREAD OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AMONG THE JEWS, (chs. 2-8.)

Here we find the Church enjoying her *First Great Revival*. The *First Growth* of the Church is now recorded—an accession of *three thousand*, who "were added"

to the original body, and were baptized. The *Christian Life* is also noted in its primitive purity. Then, as a token of power and a means of progress, we find recorded the *First Miracle*, (the lame man,) in which Peter and John are the actors—this leading also to the *First Hostility*, (from the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection,) and this led to a still further accession to the membership, so that it numbered *five thousand*. Then, amidst all this increase and prosperity in the face of powerful opposition from without, we have narrated to us the *First Defection* from within, growing out of a vain ambition to make a show of large liberality, and to feign a gift of the Holy Ghost. The opposition of the Sadducees increasing, resulted in the *First Imprisonment of the Twelve*, and their miraculous deliverance. But now another calamity, worse than any opposition from without, befalls the Infant Church. It is the *First Internal Dissension*, growing out of a complaint raised by the foreign element, (the Greek-speaking Jews,) against the native element. Here, already, the native jealousy against any foreign tendencies was displaying itself, and the decision of the Apostles recognized the equal right of all in the Church to the alms and care of the brotherhood, without any such distinctions.

This event led to a further development of Church polity in the *Institution of the Deacon's office*, and to the appointment of seven men to this work of supervising and supplying the poor. This controversy, however, tended to bring out more fully these conflicting elements in the Church. Among the Deacons was STEPHEN, supposed to be a Hellenist, who stood as the bold, uncompromising champion of the foreign interest as against the exclusive Jewish doctrine and claim. He took the wider view of the Mosaic institutions—that they were preparatory to an extension of the Church to all nations; and that the true idea of Judaism was this, that it pointed to a world-wide Church of Jews and Gentiles, in which the "*Israelite indeed*" would be recognized as the son of wrestling Jacob, a man of prayer, and a believer in Christ Jesus as the true King of Israel. This position of Stephen in favor of Church extension, brought the conflict to a crisis, and this eloquent, godly witness for the truth, died at the hands of the Jewish mob—the FIRST CHRISTIAN MARTYR. This persecution, however, extended to the whole Christian Church at Jerusalem, and scattered the *members* everywhere publishing the word. Thus we are brought by very natural and distinct steps to a great item in the development—

BOOK II.—THE CHURCH IN ITS TRANSITION FROM THE JEWS TO THE GENTILES, (chs. 8, 9.)

Here we have, first, *The Spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem*. This is the first great step by which the Church passes from the confines of the Old covenant, and the Apostles become "witnesses in Samaria." The Apostles are confined to Jerusalem for their head-quarters, while the Disciples are scattered abroad. But they become witnesses to Christ in all Judea, so that Peter makes a circuit of these Churches, (ch. 9: 31-43.) Meanwhile, however, just at this juncture, it occurs that while the Apostles are remaining by Divine direction within Judea, Philip, one of the Deacons, being driven out, *preaches the Gospel*.

*in Samaria.* This was the mixed people who formed a connecting link between the Jews and the Gentiles. They had been shut out from the first evangelizing arrangement, at the order of Christ Himself. But He afterwards (as we saw in John's history,) proclaimed the good news to the woman of Samaria, and the first fruits were gathered by Him who admits others to reap from His sowing, and to rejoice together with Him. (See Appendix, *Notes on John.*) Peter and John are now sent down to sanction this new movement under Philip. Here at Samaria occurs, also, *The First Conflict with Paganism*, in the case of Simon Magus, who would purchase the gift of God with money. Yet by the agency of Philip, specially commissioned by the Holy Ghost, the Gospel goes still further abroad. The Eunuch of Ethiopia is gathered into the Church and baptized, as a first fruit of that uttermost part of the earth. Thus it comes to pass, as the Evangelical Prophet had predicted, that there should no longer be any national barriers, (as in case of the Samaritans,) nor any personal disabilities, (as of the Eunuch,) such as had obtained under the Old dispensation. Isaiah, chs. 55, 56.

We stand now on the threshold of that great event—the opening of the door of the kingdom to the Gentiles universally. In preparation for this grand development, a new Apostleship is to be raised up, while the original Twelve fulfill their office at, and about, the Mother Church at Jerusalem.

The narrative now takes us back to Jerusalem from the Dispersion, and there we behold the youthful Saul of Tarsus, who had officiated at Stephen's death, now prosecuting his murderous work from Jerusalem to Damascus, sparing neither men nor women. But he is the man whom God has chosen to be a new Apostle. Himself a Hellenist, and thus of the foreign wing of the Jews, he is now converted and commissioned as *the Apostle of the Gentiles*. And now when the historian has pointed us to the Churches of Judea, as having rest from persecution, and enjoying the care of the Apostles, he introduces us to a new era in the history,

BOOK III. (Part I.)—THE SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE DEVOUT GENTILES, (chs. 10–12.)

The time has now arrived for the formal opening of the kingdom to the Gentiles by the same Apostle of the circumcision who had already opened it to the Jews. This new movement, therefore, is quite in harmony with all the foregoing History. Peter must have been familiar with the great idea of the Prophets, that the Gentiles should be gathered into the Church and kingdom of God. But the Jewish view had been that the Gentiles could come in by first becoming proselytes to Judaism—and so *through the Jewish gate*. Peter now has a vision at Joppa, in which the true doctrine is set forth—that the Gentiles are to be regarded as equally admissible with the Jews. At the same time a devout Gentile, a representative of Cæsar's power, had a corresponding vision, directing him to send for Peter, and to receive instruction from him. This family at Cesarea are brought into the Church, and are baptized; and the *Conversion of the household fulfills the Household Covenant*. Circumcision, we find, is no longer

the seal of the covenant, but Baptism. Meanwhile, and without any knowledge of this event, some disciples of the dispersion, who are spoken of as "men of Cyprus and Cyrene," are publishing the good news at Antioch, (in Syria,) "*the Queen of the East*"—and through their unofficial Christian labors, the FIRST CHURCH OF THE GENTILES is gathered. Barnabas was sent down to them from Jerusalem by the Apostles, and he immediately went after Paul, of whose commission he knew as the Apostle of the Gentiles. Thus the MOTHER CHURCH of Gentile Christendom was founded. And here the Disciples were first called CHRISTIANS. Meanwhile, the persecution was raging at Jerusalem; and now at length one of the three chosen Apostles—James, the son of Zebedee—falls by the sword of Herod. Another of that same honored *trio*, Peter, was imprisoned, ready to share the same violent death. But over night he was miraculously released from prison by an angel, in answer to the special, earnest prayer of the Church. Herein is the POWER of the Church, in appropriating by prayer the power of the Risen Lord. Instead of Peter's death, we read of the horrible death of his persecutor, Herod Agrippa, at Cesarea—smitten by the vengeance of God. The date of this event we know from cotemporary history, to be A. D. 44.

This brings us to the last Division of the History,

BOOK III. (Part II.)—THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH AMONG THE IDOLATROUS GENTILES, (chs. 8–28.) Up to this period PETER—the Apostle of the Circumcision—had been the *prominent* actor, opening the door of the kingdom to Jews and Gentiles. Henceforth PAUL, the Apostle of the Uncircumcision, chiefly appears.

The Church of Christ now enters fairly upon her GREAT MISSIONARY WORK. The ERA OF FOREIGN MISSIONS now commences. The Apostolical Commission of the Church to *disciple all nations*, is now to be carried out. The FIRST STEP taken by the Mother Church of the Gentiles, (after expressing a true Christian charity toward the Jews, by sending them alms in their extremity,) is to commission *Two Missionaries to the Heathen*. This was by the express direction of the Holy Spirit—and is a pattern to all Gentile Churches. Here begins the FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY.

These *First Missionaries of the Church* were SAUL (Paul) and BARNABAS, who take John Mark, of Jerusalem, as a helper. They go first to the Isles, westward—to Cyprus, the native country of Barnabas—and there, at the threshold of this great work among the Gentiles, Saul takes his new name, "PAUL"—and in the case of Paulus the Gentile, and Elymas the Jew, at Paphos, he has a specimen of his further successes. The Jew rejects the Gospel, while the Gentile believes.

Thence the Missionaries pass into Asia Minor, (John Mark leaving them for his home.) They go preaching all along, "to the Jews first"—the synagogues being the chief places of religious concourse—and offering them also

the means of access to the Gentiles who attended them as proselytes, or "fearers of God." This course was every way consistent with the idea of Paul's commission to the Gentiles, as it proved in the results. At the Pisidian Antioch, the Apostle first declares himself in bold terms, announcing to the Jews the great principle upon which he labored—*offering the Gospel first to them*, and when rejected by them turning to the Gentiles; who here invited it, as was foretold, (Isa. 65 : 1.) This arouses the envy of the Jews, who persecute the Missionaries, driving them from city to city—to Iconium, to Lystra and Derbe. They return by the same route, nevertheless, organizing Churches where they had labored, and they report themselves to the Church at Antioch. This ingathering of the Gentiles had now become the settled policy of the Church.

But here a great practical question is raised, just at the point where the old Jewish exclusiveness found it hard to yield. The Judaizing view was that the Gentiles were to come into the Church through the Jewish door—by first becoming proselytes to Judaism, and in token of this, receiving circumcision. This, indeed, ought to have been considered as already settled by God Himself, who gave the Holy Spirit to the uncircumcised Gentiles as well as to the Jews. Now, however, the question seemed to call for formal Church action.

*Hence arose another development of Church polity.* The FIRST SYNOD was now convened as a Court of Jesus Christ. It met at Jerusalem, and consisted of *Apostles and Elders*. The returned Missionaries were sent up as Commissioners, with others. The question was discussed. The arguments of Peter and James are given, and the motion of James was agreed to unanimously, as would seem. This important decision was sent down in writing to the Churches, as an authoritative settlement of the vexed question.

Now the Apostolic Missionaries are ready for a SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY. Two pairs go out instead of one. Paul having declined to take John Mark, Barnabas takes him, and Paul chooses SILAS, and they take different routes, and so the Missionary corps is doubled. We follow Paul, and find him with Silas, going again into Asia Minor, to Lystra and Derbe. He finds Timothy, whom he adds to their force. Pressing on westward, and being strangely forbidden, at this time, to enter certain provinces, (as Bithynia, and Proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital,) they made their way westward still, to the coast, at ancient Troas. There, as they looked out over the narrow strait to the European shore, they received a special call by vision to carry the Gospel into Europe. Onward they go in this westward course. Their *First Convert in all Europe* is LYDIA, of Thyatira. The *First Church* is the noble-hearted Church at PHILIPPI, to which Paul wrote an Epistle from his imprisonment at Rome. Luke has now been added to the company, or at any rate, he now appears in the narrative—serving, it would seem, in the capacity of a *Missionary Physician*. Here again the *Household Covenant* is recognized as a lead-

ing feature in the narrative. And whereas in the case of Cornelius the *blessing signified in the Household Seal* had been visited on the *believing household*—here, in the case of Lydia, the Family was baptized at once upon her profession, to seal to them the blessings promised in the Covenant. The Family of the Jailor was brought in—baptized and believing according to their case. Thus THE FAMILY is kept in view as the Nucleus of the Church. The Churches are gathered by Households. God still, as under the Old Covenant, propagates His Church by means of a pious posterity.

Thence to Thessalonica and Berea (without Luke, as would seem,) they pass, and though persecuted still, they establish Churches, the former of which is that Church to which Paul addressed his earlier Epistles. Southward now they go to “the eyes of Greece”—Athens and Corinth—the chief cities of the world’s learning, where the Greeks sought after wisdom. At the former city, among the classic temples of idolatry, he gathers in a representative man from the highest court of the Sages—one Dionysius, the Areopagite—while at Corinth, the seat of so much corruption, he founded a more prominent Church, to whom, afterwards, he addresses two most comprehensive Epistles.

Having now carried the Church of Christ into Europe, and established it in such chief Cities of that learned centre of the world, he passes, with his fellow-laborers and friends, toward Jerusalem, taking on his way the great city of the magic arts, EPHESUS, the capital of Proconsular Asia, where he had before been hindered from going. As the *Jews* invited him to remain, (instead of persecuting him, as was usual elsewhere,) he gave them a promise of his return, and goes forward to Jerusalem by way of Cesarea, and thence reports himself to the Church at Antioch.

Thus we are brought to the THIRD AND LAST MISSIONARY JOURNEY. According to his promise given at Ephesus, he makes his way to that famous Capital and seat of Idolatry, which became one of the Seven Churches of Asia, and one of those to whom he afterwards wrote a great Epistle in his chains at Rome.

At this point he tarries *three years*, making it a centre of his Missionary operations, and writing letters to different Churches already planted, and speaking already of his intention to reach Rome. He passes again into Greece, revisiting and strengthening the Churches. Here again he discovers his plan and his ardent desire to visit the Metropolis of the World. Meanwhile, he addresses to the “*saints*” there a great Epistle, and announces his determination to visit them, if the Lord will.

Now he is about to take his departure from the scene of his Missionary labors. He must go to Jerusalem, and only knows, by repeated assurances of the Holy Spirit, that he goes to suffer bonds and imprisonment. He takes most affecting leave of the Church at Ephesus, who formally part with him, (men, women and children of the Church,) at the shore, and bids them a most touching *Farewell*. They land at Tyre, and though friends beg him not to go up to Jerusalem, (as



the Disciples begged our Lord on similar grounds,) and though the Spirit witnessed to him, by the Prophet Agabus and otherwise, what the fatal result must be, onward he presses. He takes the most conciliatory steps toward the hostile Jews, but he is soon arrested, and would have been cruelly sacrificed to their rage but for the interference of the Roman arms. Thus occurs the first step by which he is to pass to Rome.

Meanwhile, he has his DEFENSES to make before Jews and Romans, on five different occasions. Before the Jewish multitude from the castle stairs, before the Jewish Sanhedrim — before Felix, the Roman governor at Cesarea, and confronted by the Jews of Jerusalem—and before Festus, his successor there, in like circumstances. Now he APPEALS TO CÆSAR, and as a last opportunity of addressing his accusers, he pleads before Agrippa II. the King, and before the grand Court assembled at Cesarea.

Thus strangely is he to arrive at length at PAGAN ROME. A Prisoner in chains—shipwrecked and wintering at Malta—welcomed by a double escort of Christians to Rome, and delivered over to the Pretorian Guard—he early calls together his kinsmen according to the flesh, and defines to them his position as an Ambassador in chains for Christ, and an Apostle of the Gentiles. Some of them believing and some of them disbelieving, he avails himself of his partial liberty in welcoming to his apartments all who came to him. And so, during two years, he preaches the Kingdom of God, and witnesses in his chains for Christ.

Thus the History has traced the Inception, Transition and Extension of the Christian Church, till we see it planted in the chief cities of the civilized world, at the chief seats of its idolatries, learning and power, until it becomes firmly rooted in the Capital of the Roman Empire.

The narrative here closes, at this establishment of the Kingdom of Christ in the Metropolis of the Great Fourth Kingdom of Prophecy. (Dan. 7: 17, 18.) Already by this crowning movement, which Christ Himself predicted to Paul, it is virtually accomplished, that “the Kingdom and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven is given to the People of the Saints of the Most High,” (Dan. 7: 27.) THE RISEN CHRIST IS PREACHED AS KING OF KINGS, NEAR THE PALACE OF THE CÆSARS. And it has come to pass, in effect, and according to the order predicted by Christ, that the Apostles have received POWER by the Advent of the Holy Spirit, and they have become “WITNESSES UNTO CHRIST BOTH IN JERUSALEM AND IN ALL JUDEA, AND IN SAMARIA, AND UNTO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE EARTH.”

## DATE, &amp;c.

For additional notices of *the Author*, &c., see "*Notes on Mark and Luke*"—*Introduction to Luke*, p. 115–117.

It is quite generally agreed, except by the modern skeptical critics of the German School, that this Book was written at the close of the two year's period at Rome, (ch. 28:30)—about A. D. 63. Luke was then Paul's faithful companion, as he had also been on so great part of his journeyings. And when "all in Asia were turned away from him," (2 Tim. 1:15,) and Demas and Crescens, and even Titus, for one reason or another, had left him, Luke remained faithful to him, even in his severest extremities and among bitterest enemies, (2 Tim. 4:11.) The style is such as characterizes Luke's Gospel narrative; and terms and phrases peculiar to the writer of the former are found scattered through this Book.

The Credibility of the History is made apparent from various sources. The coincidences, evidently undesigned, yet very striking and numerous, which are found between the statements of this writer and those of ancient and profane authorities, are most conclusive. The allusions to the secular history of the time, in different parts of the Roman Empire—to the laws, customs, political constitutions, &c., of different provinces, are found to agree most exactly with the facts. And where, in some instances, critics had supposed there must be an inaccuracy, the difficulty has been solved by antiquarian research. For example, as will be seen in the Notes, an ancient coin has served to confirm Luke's record in the minutest particulars, where the mystery had been unsolved before. An eminent writer has given, in two volumes, "*The History of the Acts of the Holy Apostles* confirmed from other Authors, and considered as full evidence of the Truth of Christianity." See *Biscoe on the Acts*. Dr. Paley has also produced a powerful argument for the credibility of the History from the coincidences between the Acts and Paul's Epistles. See *Paley's Horæ Paulinæ*—and the argument extended, in *Birk's Horæ Apostolicæ*. Besides these learned works, one of the ablest modern chronologists has applied his most exact criticism to the same effect. See *Dr. Wieseler's Apostolic Chronology*, (1848.) In addition to all these, a most singular and striking confirmation of Luke's statement has been brought to light by the Nautical Researches of *James Smith, Esq., F. R. S.* "on the Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," (1848.)

After what we have set forth respecting the Object and Plan of the Book, it will be plain that the Title, "*The Acts of the Apostles*," does not exactly express the drift of the History. This title was not given by the Author, and arose probably from the same source as that ancient division of the New Testament Books into two parts, called *Gospel* and *Apostle*. And of the second and larger part—comprising the Epistles and the Apocalypse, besides this—our History would be called, in general terms, "*The Acts of the Apostles*." Only the doings of PETER and PAUL, however, are chiefly given—the former

occupying the early portion of the narrative, up to about A. D. 50; and the latter taking up the remainder. *John* appears occasionally with *Peter*, while *James* also appears here and there.

The external evidence for the Canonical authority of the Acts is ample. It is found in all the early catalogues of the New Testament Books. In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers it is referred to. *Justin Martyr*, in the "Address and Exhortation to the Gentiles," makes allusion to it. In the "*Shepherd of Hermas*," reference is made to Acts 4 : 12. In *Hegesippus* we find allusion to Acts 20 : 21, with a use of the same phraseology. The "*Muratorian Fragment*" mentions, as next to the Gospels, "The Book of the Acts, containing a record, by Luke, of those Acts of the Apostles which fell under his own notice." The *Peshito* (Syriac) *Version*, made at the close of the First Century, includes this Book, as we have it now. "*The Epistle of the Churches of Vienna and Lyons*," in Gaul, (France,) A. D. 177, makes striking use of the same phraseology as we find in the Acts. And *Ireneus*, *Tertullian* and *Clemens of Alexandria*, refer to it in their writings.

# SYNOPSIS OF THE HISTORY.

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# CONTEMPORANEOUS HISTORY.

DATE.	ROMAN EMPERORS.	HIGH PRIESTS.	GOVERNORS OF JUDEA, &c.
A. D. 30 to	TIBERIUS, sole Emperor from Aug. 19, A. D. 14.	CAIAPHAS—appointed by the Procurator Valerius Gratus, ( <i>Jos. Ant.</i> 18: 2, 2,) A. D. 25.	PONTIUS PILATE—from A. D. 26, or early in 27, ( <i>Jos. Ant.</i> 18: 4, 2.) VITELLIUS, Prefect of Syria, A. D. 34.
36	. . . . .	. . . . .	Pilate is sent to Rome (to answer for his conduct) by Vitellius, late in A. D. 36. Tiberius died before his arrival there. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 4, 2.)
37	CALIGULA, Emperor from March 16. ( <i>Tac. Ann.</i> 6: 50.)	And is displaced by Vitellius at the Passover. A. D. 37.  JONATHAN, son of Ananias, ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 4, 3)—displaced by Vitellius at Pentecost. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 5, 3.)  THEOPHILUS, son of Ananias. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 5, 3.)	MARCELLUS—appointed by Vitellius <i>επιμελητής</i> of Judea. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 4, 2.)  MARYLLUS—sent by Caligula to Judea, as Hipparch. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 6, 10.) HEROD AGRIPPA—appointed by Caligula, a few days after his accession, King of the Tetrarchy of Philip—i. e. Batanea Trachonitis and Auranitis. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 6, 10.)
38	. . . . .	. . . . .	His brother Herod made King of Chalcis.
to		P. Petronius Turpilianus, Prefect of Syria, A. D. 39. Agrippa returns from Rome to his new kingdom, in the 2d year of Caligula. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 6, 11. Antipas goes to Rome to solicit the title of King, but is banished to Lyons, and his Tetrarchy given to Agrippa. ( <i>Ant.</i> 18: 7, 2.) A. D. 39-40. ( <i>Ant.</i> 19: 8, 2.	
40			

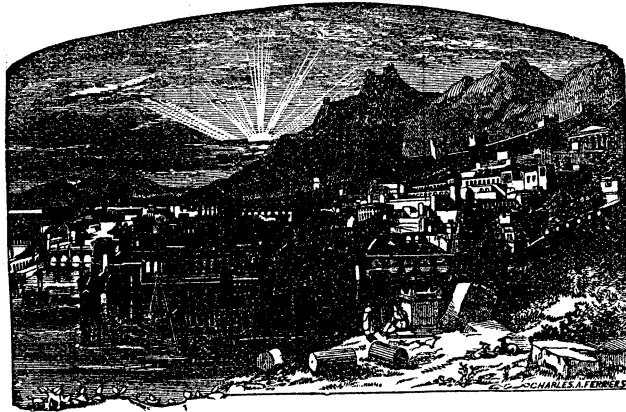


DATE	ROMAN EMPERORS.	HIGH PRIESTS.	GOVERNORS OF JUDEA, &c.
A. D. 41	CLAUDIUS, Emperor from Jan. 24. ( <i>Suet.</i> <i>Calig.</i> 58.)	Removed by Agrippa.— ( <i>Ant.</i> 19: 6, 2.)  SIMON, son of Boethus, surnamed Cantheras; removed by Agrippa in the same year, A. D. 42.  MATTHIAS, son of Annas.	AGRIPPA — appointed by Claudius, King over the whole dominions of Herod the Great, his grandfather. ( <i>Ant.</i> 19: 5, 1.) HEROD AGRIPPA, King of Judea, comes to his kingdom in 42, in the 2d Consulship of Clau- dius. ( <i>Ant.</i> 19: 5, 3; 6, 1.) <i>Vibius Marsus</i> , Prefect of Syria. A. D. 42.
to			
43	. . . .	Removed by Agrippa— A. D. 43. ELIONÆUS, son of Can- theras.	
44	. . . .	. . . . .	Death of Herod Agrippa. ( <i>Ant.</i> 19: 8, 2.)  CRISPIUS FADUS, Govern- or—the younger Agrip- pa being retained at Rome. ( <i>Ant.</i> 19: 11, 2.) <i>C. Cassius Longinus</i> , Pre- fect of Syria. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 1, 1.)
45	. . . .	Removed by Herod, King of Chalcis. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 1, 3.) JOSEPH, son of Cami.	Herod, King of Chalcis, obtains from Claudius the power of appoint- ing the High Priests, and the custody of the Temple and the sacred treasure. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 1, 3.)
46		Removed by Herod, King of Chalcis—probably in 47. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 5, 2.)	
47	. . . .	ANANIAS, son of Nebe- deas.	VENTIDIUS CUMANUS, Governor of Judea.— ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 5, 2.) About this time, " <i>in the</i> <i>8th year of Claudius</i> ," ( <i>Ant.</i> do.) Herod, King of Chalcis, dies. ( <i>B.</i> <i>J.</i> 2: 12, 1.)
48	. . . .	. . . . .	Agrippa the Younger— appointed King of Chalcis. ( <i>B. J.</i> 2: 12, 1.)
49	. . . .	. . . . .	

DATE.	ROMAN EMPERORS.	HIGH PRIESTS.	GOVERNORS OF JUDEA, &c.
A. D.			
49	. . . .	. . . .	Titus Ummidius Quadrat- us, Prefect of Syria. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20:6, 2. <i>B. J.</i> 2:12, 5.)
50	. . . .	Sent to Rome in 52 by Quadratus, in conse- quence of a dispute with the Samaritans, together with Cuman- us, the Governor. See Acts 23:2.	
54	NERO—Emperor from Oct. 13. ( <i>Tac. An- nals</i> 12:69. <i>Suet.</i> <i>Claud.</i> 45.)		
55	. . . .		Nero presents Agrippa II. with parts of Gal- ilee and Perea. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20:8, 4.)
56	. . . .		"That Egyptian" (Acts 21:38) leads a multi- tude into the wilder- ness. His followers are routed by Felix, but he escapes. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20:8, 6. <i>B. J.</i> 2:18, 5.)
59	. . . .	ISHMAEL, son of Fabi— appointed High Priest by Agrippa II. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20:8, 8.)	
60	. . . .	. . . .	About the middle of 60, Felix is superseded by PORCIUS FESTUS. (24: 27; <i>Ant.</i> 20:8, 9.)
61	. . . .	Having gone to Rome to petition against Agrip- pa, is displaced by him, (in 61,) and JOSEPH CABI appointed. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20:8, 11.)	Death of FESTUS, prob- ably in the summer of 62. Upon the news arriving at Rome, AL- BINUS is sent as his successor. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 9, 1.)
62	. . . .	Displaced by Agrippa, (61, 62,) and Ananus appointed. ( <i>Ant.</i> 20: 9, 1.)	
63	. . . .	Displaced in 3 months by Agrippa, (62) and JESUS, son of Dammæ- us, appointed. ( <i>Ant.</i> do.)	

(See Alford's *Prolegomena*.)

ANTIOCH IN SYRIA,  
The Seat of the First Christian Church among the Gentiles.



'And the Disciples were called 'Christians' first in Antioch.' Ch. 11 **pg.**

(xxiv)



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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

## CHAPTER I.

1 THE former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of <sup>Luke 1:3</sup> all that Jesus began both to do and teach,

### CHAPTER I.

#### BOOK I.

THE CHURCH AMONG THE JEWS.

PART I. *Founding of the Christian Church.* Ch. 1-2:40.

A. D. 30. *Jerusalem.*

§ 1. THE NUCLEUS—"about 120," vs. 15, (500 and over of Disciples—see 1 Cor. 15:6.) *The Forty Days—Ascension.* Ch. 1:1-11

THE Evangelist, naturally enough, opens with a reference to "the former treatise" which he has already written, and intimates that this narrative which he here begins may be regarded as a continuation of the History. From the mention of "Theophilus" we are clearly pointed to the Gospel by Luke (which was addressed to this same person, Luke 1:3,) as "the former book" referred to. Luke, therefore, is the writer, as we have seen. (*Introd.*) Literally, the Greek would read, "the first book." It was "Book I." of the history. It brought the record down to the Ascension of our Lord. The Evangelist now (v. 2,) refers back to this event as the closing record of his first book. But instead of stating what he proposes to record in this subsequent portion of the history, (or Book II.) he gives some additional particulars. These, if we examine them, are found to belong to the interval of "forty days" between the Resurrection and the Ascension. These things are such as Christ's various personal manifestations to the Apostles, and His commands and discourses to them concerning "the kingdom of God," (vss. 2 and 3,) His particular charge to them to tarry at Jerusalem and pray for the promised Spirit, (vs. 4,) as the great distinction

tion of His dispensation from that of the Old Testament, represented by John, (vs. 5,) His answer, accordingly, to their great question as to the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, (vs. 7,) and His designation of the path which Christianity was to traverse, under their ministry, as witnesses to His name to the ends of the earth, (vs. 8.)

These items are important to be given just at this introductory point, for they furnish a proper key to the subsequent History, as a history of the progress of the kingdom about which, during those forty days, He spake to the Apostles, and commanded them, and answered their inquiries, and opened to view its spiritual operations and sources, and gave assurance of the very paths and steps of its victorious advance.

1. O Theophilus. See Notes on Luke 1:3. This man was a Christian Gentile of rank, who resided probably in Italy, though some suppose in Alexandria. Luke addresses to him this history with the same object as in the Gospel narrative. ¶ *Of all—lit., concerning all things.* Luke, in his Introduction to the Gospel History, or former book here spoken of, claims to furnish a very full narrative, "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first." (Luke 1:3.) Here he refers back to that declaration with which he commenced, as having been met in so far as he had written a complete account of the sayings and doings of our Lord, from his point of view and with his full understanding and facilities. ¶ *Began.* This would imply that the Gospel narrative was only the beginning of the history of Jesus' doings and teachings—and that this Book II., though commonly called "the Acts of

8 Mark 16:19.  
 Luke 9:51 and  
 24:51. vs. 9.  
 1 Tim. 3:16.  
 2 Matt. 28:19.  
 Mark 16:15.  
 John 20:21.  
 ch. 10:41, 42.

2 ° Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost ° had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen :

the Apostles," is really the continuation of the Acts of Jesus, only in His risen and glorified state. This is precisely what we find, though it is not thus definitely expressed. It is also the history of the Spirit's work. ¶ *To do and teach.* This embraces His words and works—His miracles and discourses.

2. *Until the day.* The Ascension was properly the *termination* of the Gospel narrative. Luke had recorded this event, (Luke 28 : 50, 51,) and Mark also, (Mark 16 : 19,) though neither of them, as would seem, had been an eye-witness of it. Matthew and John, however, though they had been eye-witnesses of it, do not record it, while they use language which implies it. Matt. 26 : 64; 28 : 18; John 20 : 17. Their silence may be accounted for by supposing that they viewed the Resurrection as properly involving the Ascension as a necessary consequence; and so, indeed, they spoke of it. The Apostles, who had been habitual attendants on our Lord, may naturally have regarded His Resurrection as the proper close of their narrative, which related to His doings in the flesh. The "forty days" period belonged, in this view, more properly to his exalted estate, as He was in His spiritual body, and belonged to the spiritual, invisible world, from which He came when He appeared to His Disciples. See John 13 : 1. These doings, therefore, would be regarded by them as more strictly pertaining to the after history. Here, then, is the manifold testimony. Matthew, the Apostle, does not narrate the Ascension, but closes with the Resurrection, which was the crowning, closing event of His human history in the flesh. Mark records the Ascension, in giving an outline of leading events. Luke records it in his fuller Gospel history, as a connecting link to "the Acts." John, who wrote long after

the others' histories were circulated, omits it, as he omits many other important events as not needing to be repeated by him. And, besides, it is enough to say that the Inspiring Spirit did not deem it needful to the plan of each narrative, nor to the general object of the New Testament Scriptures, that this event should be otherwise recorded than it is. Some will have it that there is a contradiction in the histories on this score; as though from the Gospel accounts of Mark and Luke it might be inferred that the Ascension followed immediately after the Resurrection, while the Acts gives the forty days interval. But the two Books, or parts of the history, (the Gospel and the Acts,) contemplate this interval from very different points of view. The remarkable period of the "forty days" is a period of transition. It marks the passage from the earthly to the heavenly ministry of our Lord. It forms, therefore, the close of the former or the Gospel narrative, and the Introduction to the latter or "Acts." In the Gospel narrative it is regarded summarily as concluding and completing the *initiatory* work of our Lord. In the Acts it is viewed more distinctly in its reference to the nature and future progress of the kingdom under the exalted ministration of the Risen Lord. Instead, therefore, of any contradiction in the different references to the forty days period and to what occurred therein, it is only what we would naturally look for, considering the different connections in which that period is treated in either case. ¶ *Taken up.* The parallel word is used, Luke 24 : 51—*borne up*. Mark 16 : 19 uses the same as here, which more often means *taken back*. This idea may here be included in the sense which has the force of *snatched up*. The Ascension was in a cloud which is said to have "received Him out of their sight." The event had come to be familiarly

3 <sup>4</sup>To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God :

<sup>4</sup> Mark 16:14.  
 Luke 24:36.  
 John 20:19-26,  
 and 21:1-14.  
 1 Cor. 15:5.

referred to under this term.—This reference to the Ascension as the closing event of the Gospel history, leads the Evangelist now to narrate more in detail some particulars which occurred in the interval, and which serve an important purpose as introducing the History of the Christian Church. Christ did not ascend until *after* certain steps had been taken for carrying forward the kingdom to its glorious consummation. He first gave certain *commandments to the Apostles whom He had chosen*. This, of course, includes the great closing command, (Matt. 28:19, 20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:44-49,) the Apostolic Commission. This was the command in execution of which they went forth as *chosen* Apostles, to the works which are recorded in this history as the Acts of the Apostles. The Evangelist also records still another command, (vs. 4,) requiring them to tarry at Jerusalem and wait in prayer for the promised Spirit. He did not ascend till He had thus provided for His Church, and made definite arrangements looking to the efficiency of the ministry whom He had appointed. This he did, it is said, *through the Holy Ghost*. Some understand this phrase as qualifying the word “chosen”—meaning that He chose His Apostles through the Holy Ghost. But it stands more naturally in our version, and presents our Lord in His human nature as having given His last commands in the power of the Holy Ghost, (John 20:22,) who was to take His place in the earthly administration, and by whose commission and impulse He is set forth as acting from the outset of His official work. So He was “conceived by the Holy Ghost”—“led up by the Holy Ghost” to be tempted—“anointed” by the Holy Ghost. So He gave the Apostles their commands by the authority and power of the Holy Ghost, according to

the Divine and perfect plan of His work. In this sense, indeed, He “chose” them as well as “commanded” them by the Divine Spirit. ¶ *The Apostles*. It was the commandment, and not the office alone, that was given to them. It is to this we are to look. They were commissioned as a Gospel ministry, and their proper successors are they who, as ministers of the New Testament, preach the truth of Christ in its simplicity and purity. ¶ *Chosen*. For the choosing of the twelve, see Matt. 10; Luke 6:12-16. These words are added to signify the proper dignity and authority of the Apostolic office, which, as such, has no succession.

3. *Showed Himself alive*. The great fact of the Resurrection is here referred to, as most amply proven. And as this was the grand truth which sealed His ministry as Divine, and which was to be every where preached by the Apostles in proof of his Divinity, it is here declared with its abundant evidence. Now, however, Jesus is set forth, not as before the Crucifixion, constantly with His Disciples, but as “*showing Himself*” to them on various occasions. He showed Himself, also, to others as well as to the Apostles, (1 Cor. 15:6; Mark 16:9, 14,) as He would have others, also, to publish the news. This He did “*after His passion*”—that is, alive from the dead—after His suffering unto death on the cross, (Rev. 1:18.) The Crucifixion had come to be spoken of in their familiar language briefly, as “His passion,” just as His Ascension was called His being “taken up,” vs. 2. ¶ *Infallible proofs*. This term, which is found nowhere else in the New Testament, conveys the idea of indisputable proof. The fact of his Resurrection was evidenced beyond any doubt, by such clear proofs, and *many* of them. ¶ *Being seen*. The term means being seen a



• Luke 24: 45-49.  
 ¶ Or, *eating together with them.*  
 † Luke 24: 49.  
 John 14: 16.  
 26: 27, and 15:  
 26, and 16: 7.  
 ch. 7: 33.

4 • And, ¶ being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father, *which, saith he*, ye have heard of me.

intervals, and not all the time. Yet it was not once nor twice, but often and on different occasions, during the “*forty days*,” so that the proof was undoubted, and it was each time a miraculous appearing. And as this was “after His suffering” unto death, there was the certainty of His miraculous Resurrection, which proved Him and His work to be Divine, as He claimed—since God would not indorse an imposture. His recorded appearances are to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, (Matt. 28: 1-9)—to the Disciples on their way to Emmaus, (Luke 24: 15)—to Peter, (Luke 24: 34)—to the ten Apostles, (John 20: 19)—to the eleven, (John 20: 26)—to the seven Disciples at the sea of Tiberias, (John 21: 1-5)—to above five hundred brethren at once, (1 Cor. 15: 6)—to James, (1 Cor. 15: 7) and to all the Apostles before and at His Ascension. OBSERVE.—He not only showed Himself, but gave special proofs of His being alive from the dead, and of being the same well known personal friend. He ate before them to show that he was not a ghostly apparition. He talked with them—walked with them at different times, in different companies—ate at the same meal, wrought miracles, and showed His very crucifixion wounds to convince the doubter—and these varied manifestations of Himself were carried on through forty days—on Sabbaths and other days. *Thirteen* different appearances are recorded. OBSERVE.—This is the only place where the length of time between the Resurrection and the Ascension is recorded. ¶ *Speaking.* He conversed with them familiarly as He had done before His death, and on the same great topics, also, proving Himself to be the same person and having the same great work in view both sides the grave. He discoursed to them of the things pertaining to—or whatever concerned the kingdom or

Church of God, which he had come to re-arrange and extend. He instructed them fully, during this period, in the plan and principles of the Church under the coming dispensation of the Spirit—in the nature and duties of their office, and in the certainty of their success. ¶ *The kingdom of God* The New Testament dispensation, or Church of Christ, is here meant—though sometimes the phrase refers to the kingdom of glory in heaven. The Christian dispensation properly dates from the Resurrection of Christ, by which His work was attested as Mediator and Redeemer, (Rom. 1: 4,) though the great event in the public founding of the Christian Church was the outpouring at Pentecost. Prior to the Resurrection, the preaching (as of John and of Christ Himself,) had been preparatory—calling for repentance, on the ground that “the kingdom of heaven” was “at hand.” OBSERVE.—Notwithstanding these instructions, they did not yet fully understand about the kingdom. vs. 6.

4. *Being assembled.* It would seem that He was now with them at Jerusalem, on one of His last interviews, when the Pentecost was “not many days hence.” (vs. 5.) Though the Apostles, after the Resurrection, had scattered to their homes in Galilee, (Matt. 26: 32; 28: 15; John 21: 1,) yet they evidently had now returned to the Holy City, where the parting was to take place. What He “commanded them” on this occasion is here stated. This was a charge of solemn moment. They were “*not to depart from Jerusalem*,” lit., *not to be separated from*—whether by choice or by force. They had work to do there. And it was ordained as fundamental in the plan that the law should go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isa. 2: 3.) The word here rendered “commanded,” is a strong

5 \*For John truly baptized with water; <sup>a</sup> but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

<sup>g</sup> Matt. 3: 11.  
<sup>ch.</sup> 11: 16, <sup>as</sup> <sup>a</sup>  
 19: 4.  
<sup>h</sup> Joe. 3: 18.  
<sup>ch.</sup> 2: 4, <sup>and</sup>  
 11: 15.

term, and is used of a military command. They were there to "wait for the promise of the Father." It was the "promise of the Holy Spirit's outpouring," (vs. 5.) It is here termed "the promise of the Father," as the sum of the Old Testament promises—as that chief gift which was lacking under the Old Dispensation, and which "was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." (John 7: 39.) OBSERVE.—They were charged to remain together at Jerusalem, because the Spirit was to come upon them in their united capacity, not as scattered, but as together—an assembly—the Church. And so (ch. 2: 1,) the Spirit came upon them when "they were all, with one accord, in one place."—This promise, "*said He, ye have heard of (from Me).*" He had spoken it to them in Luke 24: 49. The Old Testament Dispensation was called "the ministration of the letter;" the New Testament Dispensation, that of the Spirit. 2 Cor. 3: 6-8. This had been promised under the Old Testament. Joel 3: 1; Zech. 12: 10. He had said to them, "Behold I send the promise of my Father upon you. But tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high." Luke 24: 49. This is recorded by Luke in immediate connection with the Ascension, which was only ten days before the day of the outpouring at Pentecost.

5. For John indeed. Our Lord thus confirms the words of John himself as now and thus to be fulfilled, (Matt. 3: 11; John 1: 33,) in regard to the higher Baptism. John's work was typical of His, and was of no use apart from His; as preparing for and standing in contrast with His. It might here be asked whether the Apostles had been baptized? If so, it had been with John's baptism. This would have been likely enough to occur when all Jerusalem and Judea, and beyond Jer-

dan, came to be baptized of Him, and even our Lord Himself. OBSERVE.—(1) THE CHURCH IS ONE under both economies—and the New Testament Church is only the substance of the Old Testament shadow. The Gentile Church is a branch of the wild olive grafted into the old olive stock, and partaking of the root and fatness of it. Rom. 11: 17. Hence, we have here the Old Testament (Jewish) Church, about to be enlarged and reformed, not, however, by any organic development of its own life, but by the unfolding of the Divine plan in the fullness of the time. We have no trace of any new organization, as if there had been no Church before. On the contrary, the old membership convene and transact Church business as a Church already. (2) The contrast between John's baptism and Christ's is represented as in the element. One being "*with water,*" the other "*with the Holy Ghost,*" though the latter is, of course, a personal agency—and not merely an influence. It may fairly be inferred that the mode of baptism with water will be like that of baptism with the Holy Ghost. This latter is spoken of as sprinkling, raining down, outpouring, (Isa. 32: 15,) &c., and we have this light thrown on the mode of baptizing with water. See Notes on Matt. OBSERVE.—As John had fulfilled his preparatory work with this water-baptism, so our Lord would fulfill His higher work with the higher baptism of the Spirit, which John's only symbolized. The water-baptism of the twelve is not recorded. In comparison with this, their baptism with the Spirit was as the substance to the shadow. ¶ *Not many days hence.* Literally—*not after these many days*—within these few days. It was in about ten days. They may have understood this as referring to the complement of days until the Pentecost.

† Matt. 24 : 3.  
 ‡ Isai. 1 : 26.  
 Dan. 7 : 27.  
 Amos 9 : 11.

† Matt. 24 : 36.  
 Mark 13 : 32.  
 1 Thess. 5 : 1.

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, 'Lord, wilt thou at this time <sup>\*</sup>restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7 And he said unto them, 'It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.

6. *Were come together*—in compliance, it may be, with the command to unite in prayer, vs. 5. ¶ *Wilt thou*—lit., "*If thou art at this time restoring*"—(We would know) if thou art—Art thou, &c. The point of this question involved mainly two things: 1. Whether Christ himself would restore the ancient kingdom of Israel as it flourished in its proudest times? 2. Whether he would do it "at this time"—now? They wished, perhaps, to know whether this promise of the Spirit, which had been referred to by Christ as a special and glorious gift—the promise of the Father—(which was somehow connected with their tarrying in Jerusalem, the Holy City,) was connected also with their promised restoration. It was connected with the "restitution of all things" which He had promised by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. He had spoken to them of the things pertaining to "the kingdom of God." This kingdom had been familiar to them as predicted by their prophets. Isa. 1 : 26; Dan. 7 : 27. It was spoken of as "the kingdom of David," &c., and the Messiah Himself was prophesied of as "the King of the daughter of Zion"—"the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." Besides—a restoration or restitution had been familiar to them in the Year of Jubilee. It was, therefore, perfectly natural that they should ask whether this that Christ called an "enduing with power from on high," (Luke 24 : 29,) was that consummation to which they had been taught to look forward. "Wilt thou at this time fulfill our long-cherished hopes, and is this, indeed, what we are to look for by tarrying now in our ancient capital?" This, indeed, was the restoration promised, (Micah 4 : 8)—this was

the glorious kingdom which David's and Solomon's, at the most splendid period, only dimly typified. Well enough is it that they broach this question now, only they are not prepared for all the facts. (See Dan. 2 : 21; 7 : 12.) He had taught them to pray, "Thy kingdom come." But their views were erroneous or defective as to the nature of this kingdom. They looked chiefly for the temporal power and grandeur of their ancient rule, to be won by force of arms. For this view, David was punished when he numbered the people. (2 Sam. 24 : 10.) It was external, secular dominion that they had long hoped for, when again, as of old, their oppressors and enemies should be vanquished by the hosts of Israel. They did not yet see how the Spirit could give "power," and how the kingdom of Jesus was to embrace and overtop all earthly kingdoms—how "the King of kings" was to win to Himself all authority, and all power on the earth, and draw all unto Him, in a "kingdom" which is "not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14 : 17.) This was, indeed, the very point of misunderstanding and difficulty—(1) as regards the true Israel—(2) the true power—(3) the true means for the restoration of the kingdom—and (4) the true glory of their Messiah's reign. On these points they would need enlightenment. And this the Spirit would give. OBSERVE.—Christ's kingdom shall have more and more visible power in the world—it shall outwardly extend every where—and shall appropriate to itself human means and material resources, and shall attain to universal dominion. But,

7. As to "*the times or the seasons*" it did not belong to them to know. They

8 "But ye shall receive || power, " after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and °ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

in ch. 2:1-4.  
|| Cr, the power  
of the Holy  
Ghost coming  
upon you.  
n Luke 24:49.  
o Luke 24:48.  
John 15:27.  
vs. 22.  
ch. 2:32.

were such matters as the Father had set led by His own proper power. They were to be rather witnesses of past events, than prophets of future dates. And on this point of "When shall these things be?" He would give them no satisfaction, because this lay in the prerogative of God to "hasten it in His time;" and any such disclosure of dates or periods, would encourage vain curiosity and self-dependence rather than a disposition to "wait on the Lord." ¶ *Times or the seasons.* Daniel had already said "He changeth the times and the seasons," (Dan. 2:21.) He holds them in His own "power" or prerogative. This declaration of our Lord is in keeping with what we find in prophecy; that even though figures are given, it is not with such definite limitations commonly as to define the actual boundaries of events as to the very "day and hour." See Mark 13:22.—Of the two terms here used, the former relates to the general idea of time, and the latter to the occasion, or present circumstances. "The times (seasons) of refreshing"—"times of restitution"—"times (seasons) of the Gentiles"—are spoken of. It was not for them to know either the "times" in general, or the particular "seasons" or occasions, with the attendant circumstances, in the case of this and other events. As regards the event itself, the restoration of the kingdom is admitted as about to come to pass; the thing itself is to be done, else there would have been no time.—*Bengel.* But instead of satisfying their curiosity about the time when, He directs their inquiry to the great point how this predicted kingdom is to come, involving their agency. OBSERVE.—(1) It is ours to wait on God with filial confidence, in prayer—in concerted prayer—and to wait for the fulfillment of His promises, and look for the opening

of His gracious purposes, without unduly prying into what He has not revealed. (2) So far as He has given to us any definite dates in prophecy, we are to use them for our encouragement: and where He has withheld them we are not to act as though we had the gift of prophecy. The plan of God is to furnish exercise to Christian faith.

8. But—while nothing was directly answered by our Lord to their question about the time of restoration of the kingdom, it is fairly implied by His reply that a restoration was contemplated, only as regards the time they could not claim to know. And now the nature of the gift to be sent down upon them at Jerusalem, which was referred to, (vs. 4, 5,) and which led to their inquiry, (vs. 6,) our Lord explains—that this should be the gift of power, yet not indeed of secular, temporal power such as they had thought, but of power in the highest sense. This was the power that had been sadly wanting in Israel, and the want of which had led to their degradation as a people. It was the power of Jacob as a prevailer. This gave him the new name *Israel*, as one who "prevails with God and with men"—and this is the power which was to be given to the true Israel—the Israel after the Spirit—and this should be, in the highest sense, the restoration of the kingdom as a kingdom of prevailers, according to the true purport of the prophecies. OBSERVE.—It is here implied that the Holy Spirit is the only source of power. For the Apostles, it is that power spoken of, ch. 4:30, which they should have as witnesses of Christ's Resurrection. And "in the regeneration," (or restoration,) they were to "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." ¶ *After that—lit., the Holy Ghost having come.* This power

¶ Luke 24:51.  
John 6:62.  
¶ vs. 2.

9 And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight.

was to follow from the outpouring of the Spirit upon them. It was that efficiency which consisted of miraculous gifts, and "power with God and men" for a mighty work in the world. Gen. 32:28. See Matt. 28:19. ¶ *Witnesses.* They were to go forth as living witnesses unto Christ, testifying of His Life, Death and Resurrection, and preaching His doctrines. In this witnessing-work they were to have "great power." See ch. 4:33. They should receive supernatural endowments, including inspiration, &c. They had already received "the keys of the kingdom" with reference to their powerful work of organizing and extending the Christian Church, (John 20:22.) ¶ *Both in Jerusalem, &c.* Here, most remarkably, our Lord sketches the very path which Christianity was to travel. The successive steps here traced agree precisely with the sections of the History. 1. They began "*at Jerusalem,*" chs. 3:1; 6:7. 2. The persecutions in the time of Stephen drove out the disciples preaching the word "*in all Judea,*" ch. 8:1-4. 3. Then the ancient confines were crossed and Christianity went from Jerusalem to Samaria first, to a mixed people, ch. 8:4-40. (These were a connecting link between the Jews and Gentiles. See *Notes on John—Appendix.*) 4. Then the preaching at Antioch, and conversion of Paul, and the vision of Peter, led to the extension of Christianity "*to the uttermost parts of the earth,*" ch. 9—the end. This last applies not only to the Apostles' preaching throughout the then known world, but to the preaching of the future ministry, as included in the apostolical commission, "Go ye and teach all nations"—and in the promise, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—("the age"—referring to the entire Christian dispensation, and thus embracing all spheres and localities of their labor.)

See Ps. 2:8; Isa. 49:6; Matt. 28:19—which show that the whole world is meant as the field for the Christian ministry to cultivate. "The field is the world," Matt. 13:38.

9. The Ascension of our Lord is now recorded more in detail than in the Gospel narrative by Luke. The Ascension itself is just what we might expect from His Resurrection; for He would scarcely have been miraculously raised from the dead, except to ascend bodily. Besides, the translations of Enoch and Elijah under the Old Dispensation pointed forward to this, and are explained by it as the types of this. The Ascension of Christ to the right hand on high, is plainly supposed by all the doctrines and ordinances of Christianity. It lies at the foundation of the whole system. And in the Scripture, the Resurrection calls for the Ascension as a proper consequence of it, and connected with it. Our Lord clearly and repeatedly referred to it beforehand. "I go to my Father," &c. (John 16:10.) "What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascending up where He was before?" John 6:62. See also 1 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 2:6; 4:8; 1 Pet. 3:22; Matt. 26:64—where the Ascension is clearly implied. He had foretold His departure from the earth to the Father, and the Spirit's advent in His stead. (John 14:26.) This event, therefore, was just what they might have expected. (For the necessity of His departure, see *Notes on John*, ch. 14:15.) ¶ *When He had spoken, &c.* That is—after He had given His commands, and set forth the course of His kingdom, of which He had laid the foundation in His whole previous ministry—"while they beheld, He was taken up." It was done before their eyes. They saw it. They had seen Him repeatedly since His Death and Resurrection, and now they saw the same Person *taken up* in the cloud, which enwrapped Him and bore

10 And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel ;

Mark 16: 5.  
Luke 24: 4.  
John 20: 12.  
ch. 10: 3-30.

Him, as in a chariot, to heaven. This was not at all more remarkable than many other wonderful miracles which they had seen attesting His commission. They might easily have judged this event to be the natural consequence of all His previous history, especially they who had beheld His Transfiguration. Then, also, they had seen "a bright cloud" (like the Shecinah or symbol of the Divine presence,) "overshadowing them," and had heard the voice of the Father out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son." Matt. 17: 5. Soon afterward the Apostles understood this enthroning of the Risen Lord, for Peter is soon found preaching, "Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour." Acts 6: 31. "Whom the heavens must receive until the times of the restitution of all things," &c. See Acts 2: 23. And we find them praying to Him as the Risen Lord, (see vs. 24,) and recognizing Him as actively administering the affairs of the Church from His throne in heaven, as "Lord and Christ." ¶ *Taken up—lifted up*—viz. from the earth. This is not the same word as in vs. 2, and refers not to the whole transaction, but to the first lifting up from the ground. He is spoken of as exalted by the right hand of God. Could not these Apostles see that the Glorious King was thus escorted to His kingly seat on high? Could they not understand this as His going to sit on the right hand of the Father till His enemies be made His footstool, (Ps. 110: 1,) as the seating of God's King upon His holy hill of Zion? (Ps. 2: 6.) ¶ *A cloud received Him—upbore Him*. "While, therefore, the going up of Elijah may be compared to the flight of a bird which none can follow, the Ascension of Christ is, as it were, a bridge between heaven and earth" for all who are His people. Or rather it is the ladder of Jacob, as He Himself said. (John 1: 51.) And accordingly we find "the angels of God ascending and descending upon it," i. e.

"upon the Son of man." vs. 10; Heb. 1: 14. A cloud was the visible symbol of the Divine presence which rested at the door of the tabernacle, (Deut. 31: 15,) which, as a pillar, led the way of the ancient Israel through the wilderness, (Exod. 33: 9,) and from which had been proclaimed His proper Sonship, when the translated Elijah appeared in glory and conversed with Him. This, therefore, was the appropriate vehicle for Him, as if borne up in the Father's arms, to His heavenly throne. And thus without any voice from the cloud, it testified, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." Now the event to which the prophetic Psalm (24) looked forward, came to pass: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in." Jesus is "Jehovah of Hosts." Christ may be contemplated as in his glorified body, in heaven. "He maketh the clouds His chariot." Elijah, the severer prophet of the Old Dispensation, was caught up in a *whirlwind*. 2 Kings 2: 11. Jesus, the Ambassador of Peace, was taken up in a *cloud*. OBSERVE.—When Christ had risen from the dead, and thus had the Divine seal put upon His mission, we should not be surprised at His Ascension. He went where He manifestly belonged. The Ascension was (1) The glorification of His human nature. (2) The restoration of His Divine nature to the majesty and glory which He had laid aside for a time. (3) His enthronement as God-man in His mediatorial kingdom. He ascended (1) To prepare a place for His people, John 15: 2. (2) To receive gifts for men, which He would dispense to His children, Eph. 4: 8. (3) To be our King, ruling in us, and ruling all things for us. (4) To be our Prophet, teaching us by His word and Spirit. (5) To be our Priest, presenting His blood and making continual intercession for us, Heb. 7: 25.

10. Looked stedfastly—lit., "As

ch. 2: 7, and  
13: 31.  
Dan. 7: 13.  
Matt. 24: 30.  
Mark 13: 26.  
Luke 21: 27.  
John 14: 3.  
1 Thess. 1: 10,  
and 4: 16.  
2 Thess. 1: 10.  
Rev. 1: 7.

11 Which also said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.

*they were gazing earnestly toward heaven, while He was departing*" thither. The cloud seems to have continued visible for a time. They were full of amazement, and, as the term signifies, they were earnestly looking up with fixed attention—so that there was every evidence of the miraculous fact. He did not ascend while they were asleep, or gazing elsewhere. They may even have continued gazing after He had passed out of view, (vs. 11.) The terms rendered, *as he went up*, mean, *while He was removing, (or departing.)* The verb is used twice in this passage, (vs. 10 and 11,) and it signifies elsewhere, an ordinary removing from one place to another. It was, indeed, only a proper return to the heaven where He belonged—"ascending up where He was before," John 6: 62; and so it is hinted in verse 2, by the use of the term "taken up," or taken back to heaven. *See Notes.* OBSERVE.—While He is spoken of as "taken up," He is here spoken of as "removing"—going up, as by His own power. This agrees with what we elsewhere find, that He is sometimes said to have been exalted by the right hand of the Father, (ch. 2: 33;) again, He is referred to as "having gone into heaven," (1 Pet. 3: 22.) ¶ *Behold.* This was surprising to them. ¶ *Two men.* Now that Jesus has carried His humanity into heaven, the heavenly beings appear on earth as men. Now that He has become the ladder, as Jacob saw it, connecting the two worlds, "the angels of God ascend and descend upon Him," as He foretold them that they should see. (John 1: 51.) These were doubtless *angels*—as Luke has described them, (Luke 24: 4,) and probably enough they were the same angels as appeared after the Resurrection, explaining, directing and comforting them. Matt.

28: 5. It has been suggested that these "two men" may have been Moses and Elias, who appeared at the Transfiguration. Luke 9: 31; Matt. 17: 3. ¶ *In white apparel.* This is the heavenly dress—a symbol of purity—"raiment white as snow," (Matt. 28: 3; Rev. 1: 14;) "white robes," (Rev. 7: 9, 13, 14; 15: 6;) "linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness of saints." (Rev. 19: 8.) OBSERVE.—They who look steadfastly after Jesus shall have heavenly communications and directions, and shall be comforted in the view of His second coming in glory.

¶ 11. *Which also said.* They not only appeared, but they spake to them in comforting words, as at the Resurrection—as ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation. Heb. 1: 14. ¶ *Ye men of Galilee.* This mode of address may have been intended to show that they were recognized by the angels, and their history known to them, that thus their Divine authority, as God's messengers to them, might be manifest. It would also remind them of their lowly origin—their call to be Christ's Disciples, and their consequent obligation to obey Him, checking thus their ambitious thoughts. It would also hint to them of their human relations, ("men, Galileans,") that thus they might not be gazing idly into heaven—as if waiting there for Him to return—but be about their work as men in the various actual relations of life. ¶ *Why stand ye?* If these were, indeed, the very same angels who appeared at the sepulchre and charged the Disciples who lingered around the tomb, to hasten and meet Him in the mountain of Galilee where He had appointed, they then asked, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (Luke 24: 5.) Now, the question is, why seek ye the heavenly among the earthly? "He is

12 "Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount \* Luke 24:52. called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey.

not here. He is risen, as He said." And just as they then told the Disciples where they would find Him, so here they tell them when and how they may expect Him visibly again. ¶ *Into heaven.* They tell the Disciples first where Jesus had gone, or was "taken up"—"into heaven." This was most important for them to know. So He declared to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." See John 13:1; 20:17. Thither they might follow Him in meditation, confidence and prayer, and thither they might look, in Christian hope, awaiting joyfully His return. If they should ever be tempted to doubt the identity of His person, it is here assured to them that "*this same Jesus*"—the very one whom they had known and loved, and whom they had seen as crucified and risen—whom also they had just now beheld ascending to heaven—should return again. ¶ *So, come—(thus)—in like manner, as—that is, visibly—in human form—and in a cloud.* Luke 21:27; Matt. 17:4; 24:30. "Behold, He cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see Him." (Rev. 1:7.) "It is not here said," says Bengel, "that they who saw Him ascend, should see Him return. Yet between the Ascension and the glorious Second Advent, no event is here interposed—so that these two are connected. Therefore, properly enough, the Apostles, prior to the giving of the Apocalypse, regarded the day of Christ as very near. And it comports with the majesty of Christ, that He should be looked for the whole time between the Ascension and the Advent, without intermission." OBSERVE.—The Romish notion of Christ's bodily presence in the Mass, is here shown to be false—since the man Christ Jesus, in the personality of His human nature ascended, there to remain till He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. Other "comings" of Christ are spoken of in

Scripture before that glorious Second Advent in human form. But they are comings in power, as at Pentecost, and at the destruction of Jerusalem, though not in visible human form. OBSERVE. As His Ascension was His glorious enthroning on high, His Second Advent would plainly be the restoration of the kingdom to Israel. This would be the "restoration"—or "restitution," (the same word in Greek, ch. 1:4 and 3:21,) promised by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. "He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe," 2 Thess. 1:10—the true Israel, John 1:12.—"Thus the Ascension opens to the Disciples the future at a stroke—as well when they look to what they have to do, as when they ask what they have to hope—and as the Evangelist Luke composes his introduction under this impression, he affords at one glance the most sublime insight into the whole course of the following events." OBSERVE.—Angels were the first to proclaim His Incarnation and Resurrection, and now they are the first to proclaim His Ascension and Second Advent. Are they not all ministering spirits, &c. Heb. 1:14.

## § 2. THE LAST PREPARATION.—*Jerusalem.* Ch. 1:12–26.

### *The Prayer Meeting of the 120 Disciples.*

✓ This section proceeds to narrate the actual compliance of the Disciples with the command of our Lord, (see vss. 4–8,) and thus leads us onward to the great results recorded at the opening of ch. 2. As yet, therefore, all is in preparation. The starting point of the new state of things is to be the Advent of the Holy Spirit, and their reception of the gift according to the promise, vs. 8.

12. *Then returned they unto Jerusalem* "with great joy," Luke 24:52—and promptly, it would seem, as soon



α ch. 9: 37, 39,  
and 20: 8.  
γ Matt. 10: 2,  
3, 4.

\* Luke 6: 15.

α Jude 1.

13 And when they were come in, they went up \*into an upper room, where abode both †Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James, *the son of Alphaeus*, and \*Simon Zelotes, and \*Judas *the brother of James*.

as they received this message from the angels—and in obedience to the Divine direction. Must they not have gone to the Holy City full of hope, bent on, and waiting for, the promise of the Father, as the fulfillment of their long cherished desires? ¶ *The Mount called Olivet—called Olive Yard*—the “Mount of Olives.” Luke, in the Gospel History, had spoken of the Ascension as from *Bethany*, Luke 24: 50. This was on the eastern declivity of Olivet, and not on the summit nor the slope overlooking Jerusalem. But the district of Bethany extended beyond the town itself toward the summit of Olivet. Luke here gives the distance of the mountain from the city, rather than the distance of Bethany. This would furnish a general idea of the locality. Yet he seems to have an object in stating the distance as being “*a Sabbath day's journey*”—and this might be to give a more precise account than that in the Gospel History, and would seem to show that that “district of Bethany” from which He ascended was within the limits of the Sabbath day's journey. This was a sacred limit—the outermost boundary of the camp in the wilderness, measured on any side from the tabernacle—and hence it was the utmost distance which the Israelites might travel for worship. Mount Olivet—the spot so frequented by our Lord on Sabbaths and other days, is here declared to be within this sacred limit—within the holy boundary line for sacred, devotional acts, or for the Sabbath's travel to worship. (In Luke 24: 52, it is said they worshiped Him.) This distance was seven and a half furlongs, or three-fourths of a mile. But the town of Bethany was fifteen furlongs, (John 11: 18,) and Josephus gives the distance of Mount Olivet as either five furlongs or six, according to the point measured from. The read-

ing is literally, “*which (the Mount) is nigh to Jerusalem, having (amounting to) a Sabbath day's journey.*” The Mount of Olives is here spoken of rather than Bethany, because of the prophecies which mention it as the scene of most glorious manifestations of God. Ezekiel saw “the glory of Jehovah” ascending and departing from the temple at Jerusalem, and again descending and standing on the mountain on the east side of Jerusalem, Ezek. 11: 23. It was in the attitude of departing and at the same time remaining. This was, indeed, the case—that while He visibly withdrew from His Church, He would be present by His Spirit. Ezekiel has abundantly set forth this advent and work of the Spirit in the Church—making the dry bones live—sprinkling clean water upon Israel to make them clean, &c., Ezek. 36: 25. So Zechariah sees Mount Olivet as the spot of that final and wonderful manifestation of the Messiah, (Zech. 14: 4,) which should confound His enemies. “The Church of the Ascension,” so called, on the summit of Olivet, is somewhat more than six furlongs from the city—though we have no good ground for fixing upon that very spot as the true locality, any more than for believing that the print which they show in a stone there, resembling the track left by one's foot in the snow or sand, is the real foot-print of our Lord at the Ascension, as they assert. It may be that Luke, in this notice, means to refer only in the general to their return to Jerusalem, and states that they were no further distant than Mount Olivet, which is so near to the city as to be only a Sabbath day's journey.

13. It would seem that, from all that Jesus had taught them about the kingdom of God during the forty days, (vs. 3,) and from the explicit statement and direction given them, (vs. 4, 5,)

14 <sup>b</sup>These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with <sup>c</sup>the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with <sup>d</sup>his brethren

<sup>b</sup> ch. 2: 1, 40.

<sup>c</sup> Luke 23: 49,  
55, and 24: 19.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. 13: 55.

and also from His actual Ascension, they had begun to understand the nature of the coming events so far as to resort to prayer. It is stated in Luke that they worshiped Him on the spot, before their return to the city, (Luke 24: 52.) and now they seem united and earnest in their supplication (vs. 14,) for the power to come from the promised descent on them of the Holy Ghost. ¶ *When they were come in to Jerusalem—whither they returned* “with great joy,” as Luke tells us, (Luke 24: 52,) showing their joyful apprehension of what they were to expect from their risen Lord, and the great change in their views since the first mention of His going away, (John 14.) ¶ *They went up into an upper room.* Literally, *the upper chamber, where abode*, &c. It was some well known place of religious resort for the Disciples, probably in a private house, and not in the temple. It is also recorded by Luke (24: 53,) that they were *continually* (that is, at all seasons of stated worship,) in the temple. These seem to be distinguished from each other. It may have been the upper chamber, where the Last Supper had been taken, and consecrated by that memorable transaction, (Matt. 26: 18.) That was a “guest chamber,” provided, according to the custom, for guests at the Passover, and it may have remained in their use until Pentecost. ¶ *Where abode.* Literally, *where were remaining*—sojourning usually. This is not to be understood of actual residence and habitation, but of habitual resort as a place frequented for religious purposes. It was customary in Jewish houses to have an upper chamber—sometimes like the observatory of a modern house, rising above the level of the flat roof—for exercises of devotion. It was often a large apartment, like a hall, and fit for social worship, (ch. 9: 37, 20: 8.) They did not all live in one house. John 19: 27. It is not meant that Peter, and the rest

here named, were already there, but that these all resorted thither as soon as they came to the city from the Ascension scenes. See ch. 9: 37; Mark 14: 15. The list of the Apostles is here complete, Judas Iscariot excepted. See Luke 6: 13–16. Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, and Philip, were the first five who were called, John 1: 35, &c. ¶ *Bartholomew.* He is generally regarded as the same with Nathaniel, and this name is found answering to the other in the different lists. ¶ *James.* It is still common in Syria and Palestine to designate a son by the name of his father. Literally, “James of Alphaeus.” ¶ *Simon Zelotes.* In Matt. 10: 4, called “the Cananite,” not *Canaanite*—but from a Hebrew term meaning the same as “Zelotes” in Greek, or a zealot in English—probably from his former zeal in support of Judaism, and so called to distinguish him from Simon Peter. See Luke 6: 15. The name was not applied to a political sect until afterwards. ¶ *Judas.* Literally, *Judas of James*. The term *brother* is supplied, because it is known that this was the relation. Jude 1.

14. *These all continued—were continuing.* Here they were wont to meet for prayer. See vs. 15. Their earnestness and unanimity in prayer is here recorded. It is only such whom the Master hears—and hence it is here given, in preparation for the narrative of the successful result. The term here used is elsewhere rendered “continuing instant” in prayer, Rom. 12: 12. “Attending continually” upon this very thing, Rom. 13: 6. ¶ *With one accord.* This term is frequently used in the History, and is applied to their worship in public assembly. It means really the same as *unanimously*, and signifies their entire harmony of purpose and desire. ¶ *In prayer*, &c. Literally, *in the prayer and the supplication*, viz. which they were engaged in. This intimates that all the prayer

15 ¶ And in these days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number \* of names together were about an hundred and twenty,)

and entreaty would be with a distinct aim, and would be of small account without harmony and unity among themselves; and it also points to the prayer as the great business before them, and that which was commanded, and the only means of obtaining the blessing. ¶ *With (the) women*, i. e. those who had been spoken of by Luke, (8: 2, 3,) where he names several and speaks of many others. Some of the number were doubtless Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, the mother of Zebedee's children, Joanna the wife of Chuza, and Susanna. It would be natural to expect those who had been last at the cross and first at the sepulchre, to be present now: and hence when the women are spoken of, it is not necessary to name them. "The women who followed Him from Galilee"—the "daughters of Jerusalem"—"the Marys"—these were they. There is no ground for understanding this term to mean "the wives" of the Apostles, though we know that some of them (as Peter, Matt. 8: 14; 1 Cor. 9: 5,) had wives, who were probably present if they had them now. ¶ *And Mary*. Our Lord's mother is here mentioned for the last time—and her name is added here with emphasis—as if to prevent any such superstition as that of the Romanists, who pay worship to her as the Queen of Heaven. She is here particularly named as one of the praying Disciples, and not claiming any superior rank among them—acting with them as a Disciple of her exalted Son, and a believer in his proper Godhead. Who would ever dream of her having or claiming any rank with Him as an Intercessor or Mediator? Who could justly suppose that she who here prays to Him as the only Mediator, would receive the prayers of the Church as if she were Divine and a Goddess! ¶ *His brethren*. If James and Jude among the twelve were brothers of our Lord, (or either of them,) as some sup-

pose, then these refer to the rest of His brethren who are spoken of in John 7: 5, as not believing in Him. Some understand, however, from the language here, that none of his brethren could have been among the twelve; though this does not necessarily follow. They may be mentioned here so particularly to show the change that had taken place in their views and feelings since that period when they were spoken of as unbelieving. (See Notes on John 7: 5.)

*Designation of an Apostle in the room of Judas.*

15. *In those days*. That is, between the Ascension and the Pentecost—a period of ten days. ¶ *Peter stood up*—literally, *standing up—he said*. Peter, from the forwardness and impetuosity of his nature, or from the fact of his having been the first designated as an Apostle by the significant new name Cephas, which he was to have, (John 1: 42,) is found taking the lead in these early transactions. This, however, is quite a different thing from any primacy or supremacy in rank among the Apostles, of which we find no trace in the Scriptures, but quite the contrary. ¶ *The number of the names*. That is, the number of the *persons*, as the list or roll of persons present gives the "names." (See Rev. 3: 4; 11: 13.) The terms here rendered "*together*," (*ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ*) may mean at (in) the same place, or at the same time, or with the same object. The first of these is here meant, and the idea is conveyed that this was only the number who then and there assembled, and not the whole number of Disciples. In 1 Cor. 15: 6, *five hundred* are spoken of. This assembly may not include even all the Disciples at or near Jerusalem. The greater number were doubtless in Galilee. It is not to be supposed that all the scattered Disciples, from all quarters, were present at the Ascension, nor is it necessary to conclude that all

16 Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, <sup>f Ps. 41:9.</sup> which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of <sup>John 13:18.</sup> David spake before concerning Judas, <sup>g Luke 22:47.</sup> which was guide <sup>John 18:3.</sup> to them that took Jesus.

who witnessed that scene returned to Jerusalem. If it be asked, "Where were the 500 on this occasion," we might ask, Where were the twelve at the Transfiguration? Nor need we suppose that the same were absent from the Pentecost. We can know nothing beyond the record. It is plain that there was an accession to the group who gathered at first in the upper room, (vss. 12, 13,) and we infer that the Disciples near at hand in the city and vicinity were gathered by the Apostles to their meeting, or joined them of their own motion. Besides, we are not to imagine that the assembly was always the very same during the ten days, or that they remained all the time together, but re-assembled at intervals in the same place, as in any protracted meeting, continuing steadfastly and unitedly in prayer. The number present at the time of this discourse and transaction were *about a hundred and twenty*.

16. *Men and brethren.* Lit., *Men, brethren*—that is, men who are our brethren. The Syriac reads, "Men, our brethren." So in v. 11, "Men, Galileans." This is a common mode of address, conciliatory and kind. (See ch. 13:26.) *Sirs, brothers.* In this first assembly of the Church for the transaction of business, an Apostle was to be designated in the room of Judas the traitor. The number of the twelve had been strangely broken in upon, and a sad and remarkable vacancy had occurred. If there had been any significance in the number twelve as they were chosen by our Lord, surely now, when they were to go forward in Apostolic work to the ends of the earth, a first necessity would be this, of filling the vacancy. As the number of twelve had reference to Israel, like that of the twelve patriarchs, so now, when the kingdom was, indeed, to be carried forward from a new start and "restored"

to Israel, the full number was necessary for the full work of the Apostolic commission. See Matt. 10:5; Luke 22:30. Hence the names are here given, vs. 13. Peter introduces the matter to the attention of the assembly, and they proceed to the solemn duty. He gives the Scriptural warrant. OBSERVE.—It was necessary always that an Apostle be chosen by the Lord Himself, see ch. 1:2; Luke 6:13; John 6:70; 13:18; 15:16, 19. Hence they adopted the lot. Yet the other Apostles in this case had something to do, and the body of Disciples had also a part to take and a voice in the election. Hence the distinct mention is made of the whole number of Disciples present, to signify, thus, their equality as called upon to express their choice, so far as it could go.

¶ *This Scripture must needs—(needed)—to have been fulfilled.* He refers to the part of the prediction already accomplished in the infamous defection and death of Judas. The term here used to express the need or necessity, is applied commonly to that necessity which there is from the Divine plan or purpose. Hence the meaning is, that the fulfillment of this passage of Scripture was necessary, according to the Divine plan. This refers them for the designation of a successor also to the plan of God. Even the traitorous fall of Judas did not occur contrary to the Divine purpose; nor shall the gates of hell ever prevail against the Church. Of course, it is not meant that Judas was, in any way, compelled to the deed by God. ¶ *By the mouth of David.* These words clearly acknowledge the writings of David to be the words of the Holy Spirit, speaking by the Psalmist, using "the mouth of David," as it were, to speak His own words. No terms could more distinctly set forth the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures, 2 Pet. 1:21. ¶ *Spake*

<sup>h</sup> Matt. 10: 4.  
 Luke 6: 16.  
 i vs. 25.  
 ch. 12: 25, and  
 20: 24, & 21: 19.  
<sup>k</sup> Matt. 27: 5, 7,  
 8.  
<sup>l</sup> Matt. 26: 1a.  
 2 Pet. 2: 15.

17 For <sup>h</sup> he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of <sup>i</sup> this ministry.

18 <sup>k</sup> Now this man purchased a field with <sup>l</sup> the reward of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.

*before.* Literally, *predicted.* ¶ *Concerning Judas.* It is here expressly said, that this language of the Psalmist was spoken concerning Judas, and was a prophecy of what occurred in his case, pointing distinctly to what was to be done. The prediction is quoted in vs. 20. ¶ *Guide*—lit., *Who became leader of the way.* See Matt. 26: 47; John 18: 3. Judas was the ring-leader of the band—led the way—pointed out Jesus by a signal, so that they might know whom to seize.

17. *For.* That is, Judas, “being one of the twelve,” answered to the description in the Psalm, as to “his habitation” and “his bishopric;” and the fulfillment therefore is made clear. Hence, we find in the Gospel narratives that where this traitorous transaction is referred to, Judas is spoken of in these terms emphatically as one of the twelve, (Mark 14: 20.) And we must infer that this language is used not merely to call attention to the heinousness of his offense, but to the words in which the very apostasy was predicted. ¶ *Obtained part.* Rather, *had obtained the lot*, inheritance, appointment or office of this ministry, that is, the Apostleship. Our Lord had chosen Him to this office. The term here rendered “part” means properly “lot,” and is the term from which we have our word “clergy,” implying also that it is an office appointed by God. Yet the term as here used, conveys a reference to the allotment of the land of Canaan among the twelve tribes, and “this office is the spiritual antetype of their share in the land of Canaan under the Old Covenant. Hence the use of the term here suggests the employment of the same means for allotting the vacant portion, as in the Old Testament had been commanded in similar case.” See Numb. 26: 52–56. *OBSERVE.*—It is not said of Judas that he was one of

God’s elect people; but only that he was numbered with the twelve, and appointed to this office. “Have not I chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?” (John 6: 70.) Adam was admitted to the most intimate relations with God, yet he fell. The depravity of our fallen nature is illustrated in the case of Judas. His testimony, also, to the purity of our Lord’s character and life was valuable, as the testimony of no prejudiced friend, but of an enemy. His fall was a severe trial to the rest of the twelve: and the results of the betrayal proved that the gates of hell could not prevail against Christ’s kingdom. *OBSERVE.*—If Judas, from his high post of privilege, could fall, who could not, but for Divine grace? If the fall of Judas did not ruin the cause, what defection or apostasy can do it?

18. *Now this (man.)* This verse and the next are thought, by most, to be an explanatory passage thrown in by Luke, as giving some additional light upon this sad event. It is not seen how Peter should have introduced it in his discourse, when the facts must have been so familiar, while Luke, as a historian, would have found it expedient to make this fuller record. But Peter could easily be supposed to make this statement, as it presents the facts in a very peculiar light entirely to his point. He wishes to impress this idea that Judas met with his awful end in the very field which he had bought with the price of blood, and in this sense, as also a type of a more dreadful and eternal retribution, he “went to his own place.” This view, accordingly, the whole assembly take of it from Peter’s discourse, (vs. 25.) Judas “*purchased*”—rather, *obtained or acquired by purchase*, (i. e. *indirectly.*) Some suppose that in a spirit of avarice, perhaps using the money from the Lord’s treasury, he was led to buy city or suburban

19 And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; inso-much as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20 For it is written in the book of Psalms, "Let his <sup>m</sup> Ps. 69: 25.

lots, called here "*a field*." But the narrative in Matthew points to this same field—having the same name, "the field of blood"—as the plot bought by the priests with the money which Judas got from them for the betrayal of our Lord. There is no real difficulty in the statement that Judas bought it, since here the whole transaction is spoken of which resulted in the purchase. If all the details of the purchase had been given by Luke here, as by Matthew, (ch. 27,) it would probably have been differently worded. But speaking of it in brief, the deed was that of Judas, the purchase was made with his money. Peter's object here is not to give full particulars, but to give a particular view of the transaction to which he would call attention. He wishes to show the Divine retribution following closely on the heel of Judas' transgression. Hence he represents the field that was purchased with his money and "*with the reward of iniquity*" as purchased by him—the emphasis, however, being upon the terms "the reward of iniquity," called in Matthew "the price of blood." He proceeds to state the horrible end to which the traitor came, in the very field that he had thus made his own, and which by his broken body (the very opposite of our Lord's,) was made doubly his own, the home of his foul and defiling corpse. *Stier* very plausibly suggests that this catastrophe occurring in this field, as is here implied, may have given the place so vile an association as to lead to its being selected for a stranger's burying place, as being defiled. It would naturally enough have led the chief priests to fix upon it when they wished to make such use of Judas' money. They thus bought with it the field that he had so shockingly set apart. Besides, it is very common for one to be spoken of as doing himself what he does by the agency of another; as it is virtually

and essentially his own act, and he originates it. It is plain that Matthew's object is to give a more particular account of the purchase, and Peter's of the death. There is no disagreement between the narratives. This shocking incident given by Peter is added here, as it falls in with his point of argument. Doubtless Judas hung himself as Matthew states, and then his body fell, probably from the edge of the precipice at the valley of Hinnom, and *burst asunder in the midst, so that all his bowels gushed out*.

19. This was related as a fact perfectly well known to all the inhabitants, so that, indeed, the field obtained the name of *Aceldama*. In Matthew it is said, after the whole narrative of the hanging and purchase is given, "Wherefore that field was called '*the field of blood*' unto this day." It was so called in their proper peculiar tongue, that is, the Syro-Chaldaic, and the name is composed of two words meaning this. Directly across the deep ravine of Hinnom, opposite the foot of Zion, we climbed up the steep bank where the vaults and grave-stones still mark the infamous spot. See Jer. 18: 17, to which there is an allusion in the name "*Potter's field*," or the Prophet alludes to the name. In Jer. 19: 6, we are referred to "Tophet," and in Jer. 19: 26, to the "Valley of Hinnom," and both names carried with them "of old," an association of foulest impurity, (2 Kings 23: 10.) In later times the curse of Jehovah was fixed upon the place by the word of the prophets Jeremiah and Zechariah, Jer. 19: 6; Zech. 11: 13. And this abomination was fastened to it even to New Testament times. OBSERVE.—Judas, as the price of his wicked gains and barter, obtained this "inheritance," instead of happiness and his high office. "What shall it profit a man," &c.

20. For. That is, all this took

Ps. 109 8.  
|| Or, *gills*, or  
*charge*.

habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein : and  
his || bishoprick let another take.

21 Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the  
time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us,

place in fulfillment of the prophetic passages in the Psalms. The prediction is now given to which Peter refers in vs. 16. This is founded on Psalm 69, which is Messianic, (see John 2 : 17 ; Matt. 27 : 34,) referring, through David and his kingdom and its foes, to Christ's kingdom and its enemies. In the Psalm the words are in the plural, and the enemies are referred to as a class in all time. Judas being the leader of Christ's foes, the Apostle sees the words fulfilled in him, and puts them in the singular. Ps. 109 is also here referred to, where one adversary is more specially pointed out. The passage has its fulfillment in every ringleader of Christ's enemies, but it had a remarkable fulfillment in Judas, the betrayer of our Lord to death. The Holy Spirit had this event in mind, and put this passage on record, with a view to this case as an eminent accomplishment of these prophetic words. This sentence is here quoted by Peter, (Ps. 69 : 25,) to show that it was here divinely signified that a successor should be chosen in the room of this foe, on whom the curse of degradation was pronounced. In the swift and awful degradation which had been so publicly pronounced upon Judas, in his shocking death, Peter would have the assembly see the Divine retribution, and mark also the Divine direction. David, the "Lord's anointed" of the Old Testament, had used this language in regard to his enemies, which were also enemies of the Church, and now, of "the Son of David."  
¶ *His habitation*. This curse is pronounced upon the ungodly leader and representative of Christ's foes—that his dwelling become desolate. The Hebrew adds in the parallel clause, "And let none dwell in their (his) tents." That is, let his abode be broken up, and his family and friends be scattered. ¶ *Let another* This part of the passage is

taken from Ps. 109 : 8, and is quoted by Peter as directing to the course now to be pursued by the assembly—namely, to choose another to take the "office," or *overship*, which Judas had vacated. The term rendered here "*bishoprick*" is, in the Greek and Hebrew, a term for the duties of a chief office in the Church, having the oversight of its affairs. It is based on the term rendered "bishop" in our version—and this is found to be used in the same sense as "presbyter"—for the bishop in the time of the Apostles was clearly the same as a presbyter or elder. See ch. 20 : 28, where the elders, or presbyters, are addressed thus, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers"—"bishops." And Peter says of himself, "Who am also an elder—a presbyter," (1 Pet. 5 : 1.) The "presbyters" were "bishops"—that is, bishops of a single church—simply ministers, and not a class of ministers set over other and inferior ones. Here, however, the term is used in its general, wide sense, of chief office in the Church. This clause, therefore, points them to the propriety of going forward to fill the vacancy.

21. The Apostle, having now given the Scriptural warrant, proceeds to state some of the requisite qualifications for a successor to Judas. He must have the same distinction as the first twelve, of whom Christ said, that they should bear witness of Him because they had been with Him from the beginning, (John 15 : 27.) See, also, Mark 3 : 14. ¶ *Companied*. This was requisite, in order that he might be qualified to bear witness of Christ's Life, and Death, and Resurrection, from his own personal knowledge. Peter may here refer to the seventy Disciples. He must have *companied*—*associated* with us—"all the time," not merely

22 •Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that <sup>o Mark 1:1.</sup> he was taken up from us, must one be <sup>p vs. 9.</sup> ordained <sup>q John 15:27.</sup> to be a witness with us of his resurrection. <sup>vs. 8.</sup> <sup>ch. 4:33.</sup>

from a late period, nor at intervals. It was necessary for an Apostle to have had such close, familiar acquaintance with Christ, from habitual intercourse, all the while He "*went in and out among*" them—that is, lived with them. Thus only could he be a well-qualified witness. Paul, indeed, was an exception, and he was miraculously informed and qualified.

22. *Beginning.* This refers to Christ, whose intercourse with them is here referred back to the time of John's baptism—that is, John's ministry—from the time or date of its close, when Christ's public ministry commenced. The ministry of John is called his "*baptism*," (as, "The baptism of John, whence was it?" Matt. 21:25,) and this date was also connected with John's baptizing of our Lord, which introduced His public ministry, Matt. 4:12-17; Luke 20:4. It was from this point that the Apostolic testimony must needs commence. And it must extend to "*that same day in which He was taken up*," at His Ascension. This would include His entire ministry; and it was necessary that they should be witnesses of the whole. ¶ *Must one.* The term here for "*must*" is used to express that necessity which there is in the Divine plan and purpose. God's plan so requires. ¶ *Ordained*—lit., one must *become*—be constituted—be made. ¶ *Witness.* An official witness—one whose office it should be to bear witness or testify "*of His Resurrection.*" This was that great event which set the seal upon Christ's work, and proved His Divine mission; and hence it was this great historical fact which was to be borne witness of by the Apostles, as at the basis of this supernatural system. OBSERVE—Christianity is founded on facts connected with the life, death and rising from the dead of a real Person. These facts were always abundantly attested by competent, well-qualified and undoubted witness-

es. And the whole system of Christianity, with all its miraculous facts, is as much matter of history, as any thing of which we have any historical knowledge. The great event of the Resurrection, miraculous as it was, was still a simple historical fact; and it is as much matter of history as any other fact ever recorded in history. It is impossible, therefore, to separate the miracles from Christianity. The very Incarnation of Christ, as well as His Resurrection, was a miracle. And, with all its miracles, Christianity has a historical basis that cannot be moved. The proofs are greater than belong to any other system. Its records are more accurately handed down and more fully searched and sifted than any others. And, altogether apart from any other question, (as the inspiration of the Scriptures, &c.,) peculiar to Christianity, it rests as a supernatural system, upon an unshaken basis of history. The Apostle appealed to the principal cities and communities in that enlightened age, as to the fact of the abundant miracles wrought among them by God in confirmation of their preaching. And these facts were never denied nor disputed. See "*Restoration of Belief*," (See 2 Cor. 12:12.) OBSERVE—The special and peculiar work of the Apostles is here mentioned. They were to be *witnesses of Christ's Resurrection*. Of course, then, their office was confined to that age. They could have no successors as Apostles, for none after their time could go forth as eye-witnesses of Christ's Resurrection. Paul was enabled to do so because it was granted to him by miracle to *see the Risen Lord*. And this he makes the ground of his claim to the Apostleship, (1 Cor. 9:1.) OBSERVE—The Resurrection of Christ is recognized in the New Testament as a fundamental doctrine, and the crowning proof of Christ's mission, John 5:22; Rom. 1:4; 4:24; 10; 7



ch. 15: 22.

23 And they appointed two, Joseph called <sup>\*</sup>Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

• 1 Sam. 16: 7.  
1 Chron. 28: 9,  
and 29: 17.  
Jer. 11: 20, and  
17: 10.  
Is. 15: 8.  
Rev. 2: 23.

24 And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, <sup>\*</sup>which knowest the hearts of all *men*, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

23. *They appointed two.* Literally, *they placed*—"put up," as we say—set forth, as candidates, two persons. It is not the Apostles who did this, but the whole assembly whom Peter had just addressed. They had been convinced by his discourse, and especially from the Scripture, that it was necessary to fill the vacancy in the twelve, and this is the way in which they proceeded. It is clear that the membership were held to be on an equal footing in regard to their vote or lot here. The same entire body of members present proceed to pray, (vs. 24,) and then to cast the lots, (vs. 26.) They thus recognize the necessity of the Divine choice in case of an Apostle, (Luke 3: 13; John 6: 70; 13: 18; 15: 16-19; chs. 1, 2,) and for their part they nominate two from those most abundantly qualified. They pray to God, to whom they refer the decision, and so they cast the lot, as a mode of indicating the Divine choice. Of course this election of an Apostle is altogether a peculiar case, and hence this casting of lots is no example for Church action in our time. The Apostolic office, with its miraculous gifts, was temporary, and does not now exist. And hence, we read of no election afterwards by this method. "When, therefore, finally not more than two were found, and set forth as worthy of consideration, the matter had been brought to the point at which the assembly could proceed no further of itself, and without trenching on the prerogatives of the Lord." "Hither," says Bengel, "the faithful could arrive with their counsel, not further. Therefore, here, at length, the lot commences." Now, however, the active part of the Church in the election proceeds, in the way of prayer to their Ascended Lord, entreating Him to signify, by means of the lot,

which of the two He chose. ¶ *Joseph* had also the name of "*Barsabas*," which means *Son of Saba*, or *rest*, or *of an oath*. It is not the same as *Barnabas*, though some have confounded this person with the one named, ch. 4: 36. He had also the name *Justus*, a Latin name meaning *Just*, and very often attached to other names, as a title of integrity, as *James the Just*. The name thus agrees with the circumstances, and confirms the history. ¶ *Matthias*. Nothing is certainly known of this man, except that he was chosen as the Apostle—as is here recorded. Some traditions make him to have suffered martyrdom in Ethiopia; others in Greece; others in Judea; but they agree in testifying that he died a martyr's death. They were probably both of the seventy Disciples.

24. *And they prayed.* *Praying, they said:* ¶ *Thou Lord.* The term here rendered "*Lord*," when used alone in the New Testament, refers almost always to the *Son*: ch. 2: 36; 7: 59-60; 10: 36; 1 Cor. 2: 8; Phil. 2: 11; Rev. 11: 8; and in the context, vs. 21, just preceding, it is expressly applied to *Jesus*, in the language of Peter to the assembly. It is, therefore, every way improbable that they would at once have used this title, if they had not meant it to refer to the same as Peter had just applied it to. Besides, Peter had set forth the necessity of choosing one who had been a companion of Jesus, and a witness of His Life, Death and Resurrection. Would they not naturally, therefore, have appealed to *Him* to signify His choice of such an one. "Shew clearly whether of these two thou hast chosen," (24.) "The Apostles are simply the messengers of Christ. It is He who selects them, and of Him are they to bear witness." It was not because they could

25 'That he may take part of this ministry and apostle-ship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.

not agree upon either one of these two that they appealed to Him, but because it was His proper prerogative. An Apostle must necessarily be chosen by the Lord Jesus. "Have not *I chosen you twelve*, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6: 70.) There is no difficulty in regard to their worship of Christ, for it is expressly recorded that they worshiped Him on the spot at the Ascension, and before returning to Jerusalem. (Luke 24: 52.) ¶ *Which knowest the hearts.* This is a prerogative of God, and Peter ascribes the same to Christ, which shows our Lord to be God. See Jer. 17: 10, where Jehovah claims this as His Divine attribute. See John 2: 25. This was the habit of the early Christians to render homage to Christ as God. So Pliny testifies in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, A. D. 102. And this is required by Christ Himself, (John 5: 23,) that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. See Heb. 1: 6; Phil. 2: 10-11; Rev. 5: 8-14; 1 Thess. 3: 11-12. OBSERVE.—(1) CHRIST is God, as is also plainly declared, John 1: 1, &c. (2) He claims our worship, as God, equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. So the Christian doxologies and the Apostolic benedictions show. ¶ *Show whether.* Rather it should read, "*Appoint one of these two, (him) whom thou hast chosen.*" The same term is used, Luke 10: 1, where it is rendered, "And the Lord *appointed* other seventy also," &c. As Alford remarks, "they did not merely ask for a sign to show whether of the two was chosen, but that the Lord would, by means of the lot, Himself appoint the one of His choice." Yet, in either case, the lot was to indicate the result.

25. *That he may take part, &c.* Literally, *To take the office of this ministry.* The same term is used here as in vs. 17, though some late critics decide for the reading here of the same word as is translated "*place*" at the end of the

verse; in which case it would be—to take the "*place*" or "*post*" of "*this ministry and Apostleship*"—that is, of this Apostolic ministry. This was the distinct object contemplated. Hence this language is made use of in the form of some Churches, at the ordination of a minister. At the close, his fellow ministers take him by the hand, and say: "We give thee the right hand of fellowship, to take part with us in this ministry." ¶ *Fell—turned aside, deserted.* This was his willful act. ¶ *That he might go, &c.* Rather, more exactly it would read—from which *Judas wickedly turned aside to go to his own place.* By foul transgression he apostatized from the sacred office of the Apostleship to go where he more properly belonged. For (1) He was out of his place in the Apostleship. (2) By all his willful apostasy he chose perdition as his lot. (3) He went where he was at home, and where he deserved to be, and where he actually and naturally belonged. Some endeavor to avoid the doctrine of this passage by making this clause refer to Matthias, and would have it read, to take part of this ministry, that he might go to the place or office suited for him. But this is utterly impossible without violence to the Greek. (1) The words are most closely connected with those immediately preceding. "He apostatized (fell) to go." The sentence would require an additional word, coupling the two clauses, "to take part, and to go." (2) The phrase "to go," &c., is never used of an office, but of a retribution. Thus, the Jewish tract, *Baal Turim* on Numb. 24: 25, says: "Balaam went to his own place, that is, to Gehenna"—hell. (3) The force of the terms would be utterly lost by so connecting them. They would add nothing to the first clause. (4) "To go to his own place" expresses a departure, and not a companionship. ¶ *His own place.* Literally, *The place which is his own*

26 And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Those, therefore, who cannot get rid of the sense in this way, would understand it of Judas going to his own house. But there is no evidence of his having done so; and if he did, he could not be said to have *apostatized to do so*. Others would refer it to his going to the grave, as the house appointed for all living. But this could not be said to be "*his own place*," in the sense of the term here used, which means his own *peculiar* place. It is found, Matt. 9: 1, "His own city;" 25: 14, "His own servants;" Mark 15: 20, "His own clothes;" Luke 10: 34, "His own beast;" John 1: 11, "He came unto His own;" 1: 41, "findeth his own brother;" 10: 3, "his own sheep,"—and so it is used where "his own hired house," "his own Son," "his own reward," "his own labor," "his own lust," "his own vomit," is spoken of, as something peculiarly one's own and not another's—belonging to him personally. So in Jude, vs. 6, it is applied to the angels that sinned, who "*left their own habitation*." This phrase is found in early writers, in the same sense. Ignatius, speaking of the end of all things, says: "Each one shall go to his own place." Our Lord had plainly said of Judas, "Good had it been for that man if he had not been born." This could have been true only on the supposition that Judas would go to eternal perdition, and never attain to eternal life. And as this solemn and awful declaration of our Lord was made in the hearing of the other Apostles so recently as at the institution of the Lord's Supper, and they would not be likely to forget it, they accordingly, as is natural, refer to it now, in their prayer to the Risen Lord. Besides, the praying assembly do thus respond to the sentiment of the Psalm, as cited by Peter, "Let his habitation be desolate." They refer also to his having perished by his own act, in the place whose perpetual abomination made it the image and

type of perdition—the Valley of Hin nom—Gehenna. The wonderful and striking coincidence gives clear occasion for this language, and makes it express the AMEN of the praying assembly to the righteous retribution which had overtaken Judas, in this life and in the next—in Gehenna—hell. OBSERVE.—(1) A man's high position in the Church is no positive proof of his piety, and no absolute security against perdition. (2) Wicked men may be appointed to important posts in the service of Christ. "He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him, and the remainder of wrath will He restrain." (3) The love of money led Judas to betray his Lord to death. It leads many to betray Him, and to "crucify the Son of God afresh," (Heb. 6: 6.) It may even enter the Church, and lead away the officers, and members, and even the minister. "For the love of money is the root of all evil—which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows," (1 Tim. 6: 10.) "They that WILL BE RICH, fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction. But thou, O man of God, flee these things." OBSERVE.—(1) Judas apostatized from his sacred office to go to his proper perdition, where his avarice and infidelity naturally and necessarily carried him. So every man will go, from whatever position he may occupy here, to his appropriate place, hereafter. (2) The retributions of eternity will not be arbitrary, but the necessary result of each man's course in life—just as the stone sinks, and the ark floats, of itself, according to its own nature. "Except a man be born again, he CANNOT see the kingdom of God."

26. *They gave forth their lots.* Some read, *They cast lots for them.* Literally, *They gave their lots.* Mosheim understands this to mean, "they gave their votes." But the term used is the same

throughout to express lot, and office as designated by lot. Peter may have used this term in reference to the office to suggest this mode of election. The phrase "*the lot fell upon*"—shows that the use of lots, and not of votes, is meant. This mode was common among Jews and Gentiles from earliest times, especially in appointing to the priest's office. (See *Æneid* 2 : 201.) The Levites were appointed by lot to their daily service in the temple, Lev. 16 : 8 ; ch. 13 : 19 ; Luke 1 : 9. It is said that Zacharias' lot was to burn incense. So the scape goat was chosen by lot, and the Holy Land was divided among the tribes by lot. Numb. 26 : 55. The term came afterwards from this transaction, to be applied to the ministry as a class in the name "clergy," though no other instance of ministerial election or appointment in this way is found in the Apostolic age, or in the first three centuries. Achan, also, the Old Testament Judas, was detected by lot, Josh. 7 : 16-18. Thus, this mode of proceeding had the sanction of the Mosaic law. The mode of casting the lot was by writing the names of the persons on a piece of wood or metal, and casting them into the lap of a loose robe. (Proverbs 16 : 33.) Then they were shaken up and the name which was first shaken out was the chosen one. Else, as some suppose, the names were cast into one urn, and the offices or portions into another, and the drawing then would resemble the practice yet in use often, where drawing is done to decide questions of interest. But to infer that this act, on so solemn and sacred an occasion, gives any sanction to dice, lotteries or games of chance, would be as unreasonable as to infer that the primitive Christian practice of living upon a common fund to some extent, sanctions the Fourierite "*phalanxes*" and profane "*communities*" of our day. OBSERVE.—This was plainly no example for the designation or election of ministers by this method in the Church of later times. This was to fill a vacancy in the Apostleship, not to appoint a successor ; for the Apostles, as such, had no successors. It was not designed

that there should be a line of Apostles continued in the Church. ¶ *And the lot fell upon.* So we say, "*the choice fell upon*" such an one. This was the event, or issue of the matter. ¶ *He was numbered.* Some understand by this, that as the result of the lot indicated the Divine choice, the assembly then voted accordingly and unanimously—either in formal election or by cordial concurrence—for the chosen candidate, and that thus he was "voted in" among the Apostles as the twelfth. The term here used means "he was voted in," (from a word meaning a pebble, by which votes were cast.) Yet this may only refer to the prior election or nomination of the two candidates, which was consummated and completed by the issue of the lots. So that it was the popular election decided and confirmed by the Risen Lord, to whom they appealed for the decision of it. Others regard it that Matthias was formally and solemnly received into the Apostolic College, so that by this final act the seal of certain conviction was stamped upon the whole proceeding. Thus, along with the sacredness of the Apostleship, "the authority and importance both of the collective membership and of the individual are most remarkably maintained in this first Christian community." OBSERVE.—Here was the Church collected by Christ Himself from under the Old Covenant and from the pale of the Old Testament Church. They were convened by Divine appointment—engaged in the ordinances of Divine worship—pleading the great Old Testament promise, as re-announced by Christ Himself—showing thus the unity of the Church in all ages and under both dispensations, and transacting the most solemn and important business of the Church in their collective capacity, according to the Divine warrant. As the Lord's Supper had been instituted on the basis of the Passover—as that to which the Paschal solemnity looked forward, and into which it now properly merged, at the coming of the Great Passover—so the Christian Church was now to be formally instituted on

## CHAPTER II.

<sup>a</sup> Lev. 23: 15.  
Deut. 16: 9.  
ch. 20: 16.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 1: 14.

1 AND when <sup>a</sup>the day of Pentecost was fully come,  
<sup>b</sup>they were all with one accord in one place.

the basis of the Jewish Church, and as its proper completion to which it all along looked forward and aimed. Yet this was not by any natural outgrowth and organic development, as that of a plant from the seed, but by the fulfilling of God's wonderful purpose and the unfolding of His plan in "the fullness of time."

## CHAPTER II.

§ 3. THE FOUNDING AND MANIFESTATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.—PENTECOST. *Jerusalem*. Ch. 2: 1-13.

The New Testament Church is now to receive its fuller manifestation. Thus far the History has been preliminary. The circle of the Twelve, which had been so sadly broken in upon by the apostasy of Judas, having been now filled by the designation of Matthias as his substitute, the whole assembly of Disciples—the one hundred and twenty, with such others as had gathered in from various quarters—were together in prayer; and a miraculous advent of the Holy Spirit took place, such as we might expect from the Miraculous Advent, Resurrection and Ascension of the Son of God. This was the promise of the Father—to sprinkle all nations. It was the promise of the Son, to send from the Father the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, (John 14: 16-26.) For this glorious Personal Advent, He had bidden them to wait at Jerusalem, whence the law of the Lord was to go forth, Isa. 2: 3.

1. *The day of Pentecost.* Lit., *On the day of Pentecost having fully arrived.* The meaning is, *on the fulfilling* or completion of this interval which brought the feast of Pentecost—namely, the *fiftieth day* after the Passover. This was called by this name, *Pentecost*, which means *fiftieth*, because it was so many days from the Passover. It was reckoned from the second day of the feast, or 16th of the month "Nisan,"

seven weeks' interval, making forty-nine days, the last of which, or the fiftieth day, inclusive of the month Nisan, was the Pentecost, or *fiftieth day* feast. On the fourteenth day of Nisan the Paschal Lamb was slain between the evenings. On the fifteenth was the holy convocation, the first day of the feast. On the sixteenth, or second day, the first fruits of the harvest were offered. As Jesus (the true Paschal Lamb,) was slain on Friday, this day of first fruits would be "the eighth day," "the day after the Sabbath," or the day which is the Christian Sabbath—prefigured all along in the ritual, as the day for the waving of the first fruits, (Numb. 28: 26; Lev. 23: 17.) Hence it was the day when Christ "the first fruits" was waved, or arose from the dead as the first fruits of the Resurrection and of the glorious harvest to be gathered in, 1 Cor. 15: 20. This would make the Pentecost forty-nine days—(seven full weeks)—after; and a Christian Sabbath day also. This feast was called "the feast of harvest," (Exod. 23: 16,) because the barley harvest, which began at the Passover, ended at this time. It was called "the day of the first fruits," because on that day a meal-offering of the new corn was offered. It was called "the feast of weeks," (Ex. 34: 22,) because it was a week of weeks after the Passover. It was one of the three great festivals at which all the adult males were required to go up to Jerusalem. It was that festival of all the three which was most largely attended by Jews from foreign parts. As a festival of thanksgiving for the first fruits of the harvest gathered during the seven weeks interval, when now the grain made into flour was first offered, (Lev. 23: 13,) it had an appropriate significance as the day for ingathering and presentation to the Lord of the substantial product of "His harvest." The "corn of wheat" that had fallen

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and <sup>•</sup>it filled all the house where <sup>•</sup>ch. 4:31. they were sitting.

into the ground had indeed died, and brought forth much fruit. (1 Cor. 15.) And all this glorious ingathering of souls is "His harvest"—the fruits of His sacrificial death. It was also called by the Jews, "the feast of the joy of the law," having reference to the giving of the law at Sinai, which was on the very fiftieth day from the Exodus, when the Passover was killed. See Exodus 19: 1. In this respect, also, the day was remarkably suited to be the day for the founding of the Christian Church, when "the law" was to "go forth from Jerusalem"—under a new covenant according to which He would write His law on their hearts. (Jer. 31: 33.) And as that festival at which the largest number would be present from foreign quarters, it was chosen in God's wisdom as the fittest period for this miraculous propagation of His Gospel.—Some hold that the day of Pentecost fell that year on the Jewish Sabbath—Saturday. But if it did, it was to be reckoned from the Saturday, at evening, (the Jewish morning,) after the Sabbath had closed, and it embraced the subsequent day till the evening of Sunday—our Christian Sabbath. The whole significance of the event also makes this apparent. On this festival day the Christian assembly already referred to were *all with one accord together*. Some think they had reason to expect the promised advent of the Spirit at this feast day. It had been promised as "*not many days hence*," where the remarkable expression, "after these not many days"—"after these few days"—might have referred them to the days that were fast fulfilling for the Pentecost—which had not then "*fully come*," but had now been *filled up*. ¶ *All*. This includes such as may have assembled besides the 120, and doubtless there were many Christian Disciples who had come to the feast. ¶ *With one accord*. (ὁμοθυμαδον.) This term is used eleven

times in the Acts, and is thought by some to convey the idea of a religious assembly met for stated worship. The frequent use of the term in this connection refers to the form of our Lord's promise, Matthew 18: 19, 20, "Where two or three (a plurality) are met together (a body) in my name, (a Christian body) there am I in the midst of them"—there is a Christian Church. This whole phrase may be understood as declaring their unanimity as a collective brotherhood—having one purpose and expectation. ¶ *In one place*. Literally, *together*. Though "the hour of prayer" had arrived at the time of Peter's address, (vs. 15,) yet we cannot be sure that these were now met on that occasion. It was rather in continuation of the meeting for prayer which had been kept up during the ten days. They assembled at first in the upper room, ch. 1: 13, and we see not why they should have shifted the place of meeting until the public services of this festival would possibly lead them to the temple. Yet from the use here of the common term "*house*," and from no reference being made to the temple, we are rather inclined to the idea that they were yet assembled in a private dwelling—very possibly (see 1: 13,) in the same house and "upper room" where the Lord's Supper had been instituted. It would be a reason for their not being in the temple, that they were charged to meet for a special purpose, and one in which the crowd of Jews who were gathering at the temple could not sympathize with them. It is also intimated that this crowd of attendants at the festival was separate from this special assembly. (vss. 5, 6.) The house is spoken of as "the house where they were sitting," not as the temple, or porch of the temple, but as though it were distinguished from other houses merely by their sitting there.

2. The miraculous Advent of the

promised Spirit is now described. If objection was found by worldly critics to the miraculous Advent of God the Son, we should expect similar objections to be made to this miraculous descent of God the Spirit. But if miracles were needful or appropriate at the introduction of Christianity, to prove the commission of Christ and His Apostles, no less would they be necessary and fitting at this period of the Church's more special establishment. ¶ *Suddenly.* It was startling—took them by surprise, and was calculated to strike them with alarm. *Calvin* says: “We must note the proportion of the signs. The violence of the wind did serve to make them afraid, for we are never rightly prepared to receive the grace of God, unless the confidence and boldness of the flesh be tamed.” ¶ *There was a sound.* *A sound, or noise* (*ἦχος*=echo) *was made—or took place.* At the giving of the Law on Sinai—the institution of the ceremonial economy—there were extraordinary natural phenomena, as “thunders and lightnings,” &c. (Exodus 19: 16.) But they were given in a miraculous way, as the earthquake at the Crucifixion. And to regard these physical demonstrations as mere natural phenomena, so as to set aside the miraculous aspect of the matter, would be destroying the whole significance of these signs. A miracle, indeed, may be not properly a suspension of the laws of nature, so far as to involve any violence done to the harmonies of the universe, because it is the act of Him who so sways all nature's laws as to act above them, when He wills, without acting contrary to them, as may seem to us. And nature's laws are only His ordinary modes of operation. But it is in such a case, at least, acting out of the sphere of those uniform workings which God has been pleased to adopt. No one, for example, should be satisfied with that view of the destruction of the Cities of the Plain, which refers it to a violent thunder storm, in which a bolt of lightning, falling on the bituminous soil of that region, set the ground on fire. Be-

cause such a view is not according to the inspired record, which reads, “Then the Lord rained fire from the Lord out of heaven,” &c. And so here. The record is not, “there came a sound of rushing mighty wind,” (the noise of a hurricane)—but, “as of a *rushing mighty wind*,” which it was not. It sounded like that. It conveyed to the minds of the assembly that impression. And it would serve to associate the thing itself in their minds with the mighty incoming of the Spirit, who is likened in His operations to the wind, blowing so that you hear the sound, John 3: 8. “It was requisite,” says *Calvin*, “that God should stir up the bodily sense of the Disciples. For such is our slothfulness to consider the gifts of God, that unless He awake all our senses, His power shall pass away unknown.” Nor was this an arbitrary miracle. It finds its explanation in the Scriptures, which long ago contemplated this event, and so it proves both the miracle and the prophecy under one. How could these Jewish converts fail to think of Ezekiel's vision, in which the man of God was ordered to “cry to the wind, and prophesy and say to the wind, ‘Come from the four winds, O *breath*, (Spirit, the same term in the Hebrew,) and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.’” Had not Christ, just before His Ascension, called up this to their mind, when “He *breathed* on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost?” (John 20: 22.) And now, what their prophet saw is to be fulfilled—that the breath came into the dry bones of the house of Israel, as they bleached upon the valley, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army. Ezek. 37: 9–10. ¶ *As of a rushing. As of a mighty wind, rushing* (or *sweeping*) *along.* The same term is used of the Spirit, (2 Pet. 1: 21,) “Holy men of God spake as they were *moved* by the Holy Ghost.” This noise, observe, was not a natural phenomenon, to be accounted for without a miracle, as if there had been a violent hurricane, of which this was only a natural feature

But altogether as if the thunder had burst over them, out of a clear sky, they felt it to be *miraculous*. There was no storm—only this terrific, startling noise, rousing them to what was coming. The idea was also conveyed of mighty power. [See Psalm 29, where “the voice of the Lord” is likened to a sweeping tempest, coming down from the north—breaking the cedars of Lebanon, and “dividing the flames of fire.” (See the phrase, vs. 3, “cloven (or divided) tongues, like as of fire, distributing itself.” Then, “shaking the wilderness, (as of Kadesh,) and rushing on to the temple.” “And in His temple does every one speak of His glory.” (See vs. 5-12; Luke 24: 53.) Then “The Lord sitteth upon the flood—yea, the Lord sitteth KING for ever.” (See ch. 2: 24, 32-35.) “The Lord will give strength unto His people.” (See ch. 1: 8, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”) “The Lord will bless His people with peace.” (See Luke 24: 36, “Peace be unto you.”)] ¶ *It filled all the house.* Whatever noise it was that resembled the noise of a mighty wind sweeping along, “it was the chosen vehicle by which the Holy Spirit was manifested to their sense of hearing, as by the tongues of fire to their sense of seeing.” And this sound filled the whole house where they were assembled for prayer. Thus, of old, the whole temple was filled with the symbol of the Divine presence. Isa. 6: 1-8, “the house was filled with smoke,” *i. e.* with a cloud, such as appeared at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings 8: 10, and of the tabernacle, Exod. 40: 34, which is also called the glory of the Lord—“the Schecinah”—the visible symbol of the Divine presence. “By this sign, therefore, it was declared that God had abandoned the temple of the wicked nation, and thereafter would not any more dwell there in a special manner.”—*Elsner*. OBSERVE.—It is distinctly said that there came a sound from heaven. Then it was no *trance* in which the whole assembly was held. They did not merely dream that there

was a sound, when there was none. Nor was it any mere phenomenon of nature, as a thunder storm with electric meteors—for in such case others must have beheld them, as well as the Disciples; and these things would have had no special application to them, and they would have had no right to construe such tokens into a bestowment of Divine power upon themselves. Nor can Luke mean that this was only a *myth*—and no historical event—for it is related just as any of the other events of the history—and no hint is given that it is anything less than the real truth. Plainly the historian here means to relate this wonderful transaction as the miraculous Advent of the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of Christ, which took place, as He had foretold—upon His departure. Yet there are those who seek to explain away everything miraculous from the Scriptures; and like the men at the grave of Lazarus, when the Divine voice is heard, they say “It thundered.” (John 12: 29.) But “why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?” (ch. 20: 8,) or that Jesus should go up to heaven in a cloud—or that the Holy Spirit should come down with a sound like that of a rushing mighty wind—when a wind is that element by which the Spirit is commonly symbolized—(the word “Spirit,” both in *Greek* and *Hebrew* meaning “wind,” “breath,”) as John 3: 8; 20: 22. And when some outward sign, token or power was proper to announce and mark such an invisible presence, what more appropriate than this? A miracle is sometimes in the New Testament called a sign, (*σημεῖον*), and here it answered very fitly this purpose, as a sign of the *Divine presence*. It is elsewhere called a wonder or prodigy, and here it suited also this description. It is, also, in other places, termed a power, and here it was a sound like that of a mighty wind, borne along through the house, with every mark of supernatural power—making the sound to be like that of a hurricane, when there was a perfect stillness and calm.



3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

3. *There appeared unto them.* The noise filling the house where these persons were sitting was a warning that there was something at hand for them. And now besides hearing this miraculous noise, they see this miraculous sight. In condescension to their weak natures, both the sight and hearing were addressed. The historian here describes what appeared to the assembly and how the advent of the Spirit was marked in its immediate effects. As Jesus had now become exalted at the right hand and received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He was ready to shed it down on the waiting Disciples. **OBSERVE.**—As at the Passover under the Old Testament the sheaf of the first fruits was waved before Jehovah, (Lev. 29: 9-14,) presented to Jehovah by being borne up and down before the Tabernacle—so already “Christ, the first fruits,” had been presented to Jehovah by being passed to and fro—from heaven to earth and back again—and this had made the true Passover to which all previous ones had looked forward. So, also, as at the Old Testament Pentecost, the product of the harvest—in the bread made from the ingathered grain—was offered, (two loaves, a plurality;)—so here, at this first true Pentecost of which all the former were but shadows, the substantial product of Christ’s work is presented. This giving of the Holy Ghost is the *fruit* of his work as ready to be partaken by men—the grain from the wheat-sheaf has been converted into bread. (Ps. 68: 18; Ephes. 4: 8.) In this view it is striking that the Pentecost points back to the day of offering the first fruits at the Passover; since from this second day it was reckoned, and not from the first day of the festival. And as the Pentecost has in the Old Testament a striking reference to the completion of the harvest, Christ as our Forerunner has been gathered in—and in Him already all his people do enter into rest. (Heb. 4: 3.) He

is the Bread of Life. (John 6: 35.) The Spirit is to take the things of Christ and show them unto us. (John 16: 14.) The fruit of His work is now made available to mankind, and as a first and fit effect of it, we find the Disciples all filled with the Holy Ghost, and thousands of the various quarters of the earth ingathered as a specimen of the final harvest. So, also, as the first Pentecost was the day of the giving of the Law at Sinai, when the people stood afar off and were not able to come into close communion with God on account of their sins, so now on the first true Pentecost, Israel is for the first time brought nigh to God, and there is no terror, but thanksgiving. And this difference in the Pentecosts is just because of the difference in the Passovers. In the Old Passover there was only the atonement by the blood of a beast—shadowy and typical at best—pointing forward to a better to come. Now that better Passover has come, and “Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us.” (1 Cor. 5: 7.) ¶ *Cloven tongues. Tongues distributing themselves.* The appearance was at first of a single fiery body which parted so as to be distributed among them. There was but one object seen in all. This—the same Power—seemed to alight in the form of tongues as of fire—distributed so as to belong to each. Some have understood from the terms here used that the tongues were forked in shape. But this is not the meaning. The fiery body that came first to their view as a unit, sat not on one alone, but on *each*, in the form of a *tongue of fire*. This form was chosen to represent the miraculous gift of tongues which accompanied. The same Holy Spirit that alighted on the head of Jesus as a dove, alighted on the head of each of these Disciples as a tongue. This glorious Third Person of the Trinity took a visible and significant shape in both cases. The gift of this true Pentecost was the *tongue of fire*. (See Isaiah 64: 1.) When

4 And <sup>d ch. 1:5.</sup> they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and <sup>e Mark 16: 17.</sup> began <sup>ch. 10: 46, and</sup> to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave <sup>19: 6.</sup> them utterance. <sup>1 Cor. 12: 10.</sup>  
<sup>28, 30, and 13:</sup>  
<sup>1, and 14: 2, &c.</sup>

Isaiah shrank from the prophetic office, contemplating that he was a man of unclean lips, his tongue was cleansed by a *live coal* from off *God's altar*. Isa. 6: 5-7. The tongue thus kindled and purged by the Holy Spirit, is the very opposite of "the tongue set on fire of hell." Jas. 3: 6. This new tongue was the proper expression of the renewed heart—for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Matthew 12: 34. And especially as their commission was now to preach the Gospel to every creature, as men full of the Holy Ghost, the whole external form of this miracle was most fit to express the idea. ¶ *It sat upon each of them.* The fiery body thus divided, distributed, sat upon each in this shape of a flaming tongue. Had not Christ promised to baptize them with the Holy Ghost and with fire? And as the sign at His Baptism had been divinely interpreted to John, "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending like a dove and resting upon Him, He it is who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," so here the interpretation was easy—that those upon whom the Spirit was seen to descend like a tongue and rest upon them, they were those who were to preach to all nations with the tongue of fire.

4. *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* This was the actual result at which all the proceedings aimed. This was the *great fact* of this new Pentecost. The speaking with "other tongues" was only an expression and demonstration of this, and would have been of small account in itself, or except as a manifestation of this. The great event was the advent of the Holy Spirit for His indwelling among men. This is here expressed by the phrase, "filled with the Holy Ghost"—and this was the case with each one of the whole assembly of Disciples; and we are to suppose that it was such a fullness of the Spirit as had been promised to them by Christ, as a

Comforter and Advocate—Teacher—Leader into all truth—Reminder of Christ's words—Revealer of the things of Christ—and permanent indwelling Agency, to abide with them for ever, (John 14 and 16.) It was a "baptism with the Holy Ghost," as the living, quickening element, in place of water. It carried with it miraculous endowments for the time then present. But the great idea was that of the Divine indwelling, which should put man into communion and fellowship with God, as the Spirit of adoption—the Spirit of truth—the Spirit of Christ. This was Christ's Ascension work, to "receive gifts for men, that the Lord might dwell among them," Ps. 68: 18. ¶ *With other tongues.* This is given as an immediate effect of the Spirit's descent. Doubtless the Holy Spirit's work had not just now commenced. But He had wrought among men only sparingly before, under "the ministration of the letter," and not, as He was henceforth to do, under "the ministration of the Spirit." It was wholly in keeping with the mode of God's dispensation, to introduce this new era in the Church by this new manifestation. In regard to the form of this miracle, OBSERVE—(1) That this was promised to them by Christ, Mark 16: 17. "They shall speak with *new tongues*," that is, "other tongues" than those in which they naturally spoke. (2) This was indicated by the miraculous sign, or token of fiery tongues sitting upon the heads of the assembly. What greater proof could be given that it was the work of God? And if this tongue of fire still rested on the head of each, when the multitude came together, it must have had a striking effect in convincing them of the miracle. We cannot suppose, with some, that the miracle consisted in the multitude hearing the same language as if it were their own tongue, and so as to understand it; for that would

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

have been a gift of ears and not of tongues. (3) It is plain from the whole record, that they began to speak in the various languages of the people present, so as to be understood by them, (vs. 8.) (4) This would seem to have been given also as a sign to the multitude, (1 Cor. 14: 27,) as well as an indication to the Disciples of their world-wide work of preaching. It is not stated, nor is it necessary to suppose that they had the tongues imparted to them for the purpose of preaching the Gospel afterwards. We find no trace in history of this peculiarity in their preaching. Nor can we be certain that the speaking with tongues in the Corinthian Church was quite the same gift. There were "divers kind of tongues," or "diversities of tongues"—though it is said that "all these worketh that one and the same Spirit"—intimating that there were varieties of this gift. In this case, "at the birth-day of the Christian Church," this speaking with tongues, in the act of magnifying God's wonderful works, was most appropriate as a sign of God's presence by His Spirit to dwell among men, and, at the same time, it was a significant prophecy that the Gospel shall go from nation to nation, till every tongue shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father," Phil. 2: 11. It is to be observed, however, that in the case of Cornelius and his friends, when they received the Spirit, it was manifested by their "speaking with tongues," and this was, also, in the act of "magnifying God," ch. 10: 46. So at Ephesus, Paul discoursed to "the Disciples," and the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied, ch. 19: 6. In 1 Cor. 13: 1, "the tongues of men and of angels" are spoken of. "Tongues" and "prophacies" are to "cease" to be exercised. There shall be no further use for these gifts. And these miraculous gifts of the Spirit were withdrawn, when the truths of the

Gospel had been fully established, and the scheme of Redemption developed to the world. ¶ *As the Spirit.* This miraculous gift is expressly ascribed to the Spirit. They spake as the Spirit enabled them to speak, the words being prompted by the inspiring agency. The effect to be secured was the communication to the hearers, in their own several tongues, of "the wonderful works of God." On the part of the speakers, we are to understand that they poured forth their high praises of God with the recital of His wonderful doings. Of course, they would speak of His Ascension, as well as of His Life, Death and Resurrection, and of the whole plan of grace and salvation, as thus far carried on. And it was the plan of God that they should convey these great vital truths to the hearers, in their several tongues. We may even suppose that they spake as mere mouth-pieces of the Spirit, so as to exclude their own knowledge of what they spake. But we are distinctly told, that the multitude understood the language in which they spake, and understood them to speak "the wonderful works of God"—not to *spoke of* these works, but to *spoke them*—to utter and publish them. OBSERVE.—We are not to suppose that each person was enabled to speak all the languages, but that the assembly heard his own tongue from one or another of the speakers.

5. The Evangelist now proceeds to relate what is very importantly connected with the miracle—the fact of so many varieties of tongues being represented at Jerusalem at that time. ¶ *Dwelling.* This term, in the original, means commonly, not *sojourning*, but *residing*. It is not to be supposed, however, that no strangers were included, for "strangers of Rome," or Roman sojourners, are expressly mentioned in the list. Many Jews from foreign parts had taken up their residence at Jerusalem, to be near the temple, and convenient to the

6 Now † when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were || confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

feasts. Besides this, they would have been attracted thither by the current expectation of the Messiah, which had for some time prevailed. ¶ *Devout men.* Their character is here given as *devout*. They were not, therefore, idle and curious listeners, but men of weight and piety, in the Jewish religion. Simeon was such an one “just and devout,” Luke 2: 25. It is applied also to the pious men who carried Stephen to his burial, (ch. 8: 2.) These were eminent specimens of the Jewish people who had resorted to the Holy City, in token of their devoutness. This, observe, was so recently after the eventful scenes of the Crucifixion, that these must have been rejecters of the true Messiah. The Risen Lord thus pursues His murderers (vs. 23,) with salvation. ¶ *Out of every nation.* As this is the glorious birth-day of the Universal Church, so it gathers in those specimens and representatives of all nations, who should yet hear, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God. This, then, is true to the ritual meaning, the offering of a plurality of loaves, from the first fruits out of the whole harvest of the race, as virtually gathered in, in Christ, Levit. 23: 17. Here was a specimen to be presented to God, of the grand products of the harvesting, which had just taken place, by anticipation, in the Ascended Head. Three thousand of all these various tongues and countries were to be presented as the first fruits of the great harvest of souls. It is from the *dispersed* people, as speaking various tongues, and thus it is a picture in miniature of what was seen by John in the Revelation, “A great multitude out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, before the throne and before the Lamb,” (Rev. 7: 8, 9-14, 15, 16,) crying salvation to our God, &c. ¶ *Under heaven.* This is a general expression, meaning “from all quarters.” The Jews had been scattered in all direc-

tions. In Alexandria there were so many as to require the Old Testament Scriptures to be translated into Greek nearly three hundred years before Christ. They had been dispersed under Shalmaneser, B. C. 721, (2 Kings 17: 6;) under Nebuchadnezzar, B. C. 606, (2 Kings 24: 10;) under Ptolemy Lagus, B. C. 320, who carried great numbers into Egypt. At the three great festivals of the nation, and especially at this of Pentecost, they came up from all quarters, as the places mentioned show. “And so, *all* Israel shall be saved,” says Paul to the Romans. And the Jews shall be brought in with the fullness of the Gentiles. See Matt. 3: 12; John 4: 35-36; Matt. 9: 37.

6. *Noised abroad.* (Gr. φωνή.) Rather, *As this voice, or sound, took place.* That is, the sound as of the rushing mighty wind—here called a voice—intimating, perhaps, that the “noise” (so called in vs. 2) was not a mere natural phenomenon, like the noise which it resembled, but a “voice”—the voice of God—the Holy Spirit. So in John 3: 8, “Thou hearest the *sound* (voice) thereof.” The same verb is used in vs. 2, and rendered “came,” (as here, in the participial form;) and with the noun it is, translated, “*noised abroad*”—or the *noise came*. Wicklif’s version reads, “*When this voice was made.*” We infer that the sound which came down from above, (“from heaven,”) in the direction of the house, was heard in all the neighborhood, and, perhaps, in all the city. OBSERVE.—Just as at the Advent of the Second Person of the Trinity, there appeared a miraculous meteor, which stood over the house where the young child was, so here, a miraculous sound marked the house where the Third Person of the Godhead had descended among men. And as the former sign was a token and guide to the Magi, as the representatives of the Gentile world, so this latter sign was a token and guide to the

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak 'Galileans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

9 Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia,

dispersed Jews, as the representatives of all lands and tongues. ¶ *The multitude came together.* As this sound so definitely pointed to the very house, the promiscuous throng just referred to flocked together to the place to see what was the matter. ¶ *Were confounded.* This term (translated in ch. 19: 32, "was confused," and in ch. 21: 31, "was in an uproar,") means *were violently agitated, (amazed.) Every man heard, &c.* These men from so many countries, and speaking such various tongues, heard these Jews speaking, some one, and some another language, so that there was none but heard his own familiar tongue spoken. No wonder this amazed them. There could be nothing more clearly miraculous than that persons, known to be Galileans, and without any previous training to it, should speak foreign tongues familiarly as their own. This is very different from the Irvingite fanaticism in England, of speaking in "unknown tongues"—mere *gibberish*—which was never done in the Apostolic age, though the language may have been unknown to the person who spake it. ¶ *In his own tongue.* The term is *dialect*. Most of the Jews migrating to other countries, as colonists, or in commerce, adopted the tongues of the respective countries, as they do to this day in every land. Some of these here represented may have been dialects of the same tongue, and not different languages. But however they differed, the multitude heard each different dialect accurately spoken. ¶ *His own* is emphatic—*his own particular tongue.*

7. *Galileans.* The ground of their wonder was, that men known to be "Galileans" should be found speaking these various tongues. The ancient Jewish prejudice looked with suspicion

upon any special attainment of foreign tongues, as being *Gentilism*.—(*Josephus* 20: 1-2.) The Galilean people were noted for their want of education, (John 1: 46,) and their corrupt dialect, Mark 14: 70. Yet they mixed most with Gentiles, Matt. 4: 15. But how then could all these, being of one province, (or nearly so, at least all the leading ones,) be found all at once so familiar with these foreign tongues?

8. *Wherein we were born?* As we say, "our native tongue." It is held by some that the miracle consisted in the impression received by the multitude, and in their hearing each in his own tongue, when, in fact, the Apostles spake in their ordinary way. But had this been so, the gift would have been, not so much of new tongues, as of new ears, and the ears of fire would have been represented, instead of the tongues of fire.

9. This list of nations is here given to show the divers tongues represented and spoken there, which would also show the extent of the miracle. Luke seems here to have inserted the list, in order to convey the sense of their current exclamations, rather than to have us understand that any, or all of them, repeated the whole list, in their remarks. ¶ *Parthians.* The countries are given in order, beginning from the north-east, and proceeding to the west, and adding also the south. *Parthia* lay south of the Caspian Sea, having the country of *Aria* on the east, and of *Media* on the west, with *Hyrcania* on the north, and *Carmania* on the south. They were of the Scythian race, and were celebrated in war as archers. Some of the crowd assembled by this strange event at Pentecost, were Jews from that country. ¶ *Medes.* The country of the Medes was situated west of Parthia, and south-west of

Hyrcania, north of Persia, and east of Assyria. These and the Parthians were probably descendants of the ten tribes who had been carried away by Assyrian kings, and had not returned, 1 Chron. 5: 26; 2 Kings 17: 6. The Medes and Persians were often associated in government, 2 Kings 18: 11; Esther 1: 3, 14, 18, 19. The tongue spoken by these and the Parthians was the Persian. ¶ *Elamites*. This country was situated south of Media, running toward the Persian Gulf, and seeming, at times, to have comprised Susiana, whose capital was Shushan, where Daniel resided, "in the province of Elam," Dan. 8: 2. According to Pliny, the river Ulai separated Susiana from Elymais. Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, was chief of the allied kings in Abraham's time, Gen. 10: 22. See Ezra 2: 7; 8: 7; Neh. 7: 12, 34; Isa. 11: 11; 21: 2; 22: 2; 22: 6. They were celebrated in battle, like the Parthians, as archers. The Elamites were descended from Elam, son of Shem, Gen. 10: 22. ¶ *Dwellers in Mesopotamia*. The same term is here used as in vs. 5. Of those who were now "dwelling in Jerusalem," some were from Mesopotamia, where they had been dwelling. This country lay between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, as the name signifies, *between the rivers*. It had a corresponding name in the Hebrew, *Aram Naharaim*, i. e. Aram, or Syria of the two rivers, Gen. 24: 10. It was separated from Armenia by Mount Taurus on the north. In this tract of country were probably situated "*Ur of the Chaldees*," whence Abraham was called, Gen. 11: 27-28; *Haran*, Gen. 11: 31-32; Sepharvaim, 2 Kings 17: 24, and Carchemish, 2 Chron. 35: 20. The Syriac and Chaldeic dialects were probably, at this time, spoken there. Babylon was at the southern extremity. [It has been recently ascertained that the languages anciently spoken in these regions of Asia were very various. Col. Rawlinson, in decyphering the Assyrian inscriptions, speaks of five or six varieties of language used in those records, viz.: Babylonian, Achæmenian, Medo-

Assyrian, Assyrian and Elymean, besides, perhaps, the Scythic-Chaldean. The Babylonian tongue was essentially a primitive Hebrew—its roots are the same—its structure is analogous—its conjugations are very similar, and the names of objects mostly identical. The language of Elymais was anciently Scythic and cuneiform. It became modified by mixture with the Semitic. Col. Rawlinson, speaking of the races whose records were found lately in the Assyrian inscriptions, says that the Nimrod of Scripture and the original Median dynasty of Berosus, is the same. Then came the Scythian dynasty from Susiana or Elymais, which was followed by the Chaldean monarchy, 1776 B. C. After this came an Arab dynasty, 1518 B. C., which, in turn, was supplanted by the Assyrian, 1273 B. C., when Assyria became independent.] ¶ *Judea*. As Luke wrote at Rome, he named Judea among the nations as having a tongue different from those just enumerated; and they come in his way in the geographical course from east to west—from Asia to Asia Minor. It is the dwellers in Judea who are spoken of, who may not have been native Jews, but who would be surprised to hear Galileans speak pure Hebrew, as they were noted for a barbarous dialect. Luke, moreover, was in the habit of regarding the dialect of Judea as a foreign tongue, since he himself was a Gentile. And as his object was to give the various languages spoken, this would be counted as one of them, at any rate. ¶ *Cappadocia*. This country was a province of Asia Minor, and west of all the former. It lay south of Pontus and the Black Sea, and west of Armenia, east of Lycæonia, and north of Cilicia. The language spoken there is uncertain, but probably was akin to that of the Lycæonians, a compound of the Syriac and Greek, which the Apostles did not understand, ch. 14: 11. This province, along with Crete and Cilicia, formed the *trio* of places beginning with the same letter, which were most celebrated among the Greeks for iniquity. Peter included this people

10 Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes,

among those to whom he addressed his first epistle, 1 Pet. 1: 1. Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa were from this province. ¶ *Pontus*—so called from its bordering on the Black Sea. This was another province of Asia Minor, north of the former, and united with it under the Romans as one province. They were associated, also, in the address of Peter's first epistle. It was the birth-place of Aquila, one of Paul's companions, Acts 18: 2, 18, 26; Rom. 16: 3; 1 Cor. 16: 19; 2 Tim. 4: 19. ¶ *And Asia*. This is the provincial Asia—the west region of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus is capital. See chap. 6: 9; 16: 6; 20: 16. In this district the seven Churches of Asia were located, Rev. 1: 4.

10. *Phrygia and Pamphylia*. These were provinces of Asia Minor. The former at this time belonged to the Roman province of Asia, having Bithynia and Galatia on the north, and Lycia and Pamphylia on the south. The latter borders on the Mediterranean Sea. In these provinces of Asia Minor the Jews spake dialects of the Greek. ¶ *Egypt*. The country watered by the River Nile and south of these just named, is here mentioned. Great numbers of Jews resided in Alexandria—two-fifths, indeed, of the whole population. They had been encouraged to settle there by Alexander and Ptolemy Lagus, and their numbers had led to the demand for a translation into Greek of the Old Testament Scriptures about 285 B. C. The language of the country was Coptic, and sojourners from “Egypt” in general would speak that tongue. ¶ *Libya about Cyrene*. Libya is the general name for Africa, especially the northern part. This region “about Cyrene” was about 500 miles west of Alexandria in Egypt, and was called Pentapolis, from its having five celebrated cities in its bounds. It was a Greek colony. The Jews composed a fourth of the population in Cyrene, and formed

an independent body, with a governor of their own, just as in Alexandria they had ethnarchs of their own. *Jos. Ant.* xiv. 7, 2; xix. 7, 2. Simon, who was compelled to bear our Saviour's cross, was from this region, Matt. 27: 32. And the Jews of Cyrene were so numerous in Jerusalem as to have had a synagogue of their own. (ch. 6: 9.) ¶ *Strangers of Rome*. Literally, *the Romans sojourning*, (i. e. in Jerusalem.) There were so many Jews in Rome that they had eight synagogues there—according to Josephus. The term here rendered “*strangers*” is probably to be distinguished from that rendered “*dwellers*,” vs. 5–9, and denotes more temporary sojourn. The term is used in ch. 17: 21, of the “*strangers*” (rather foreigners,) sojourning at Athens—and here it is meant to denote those from Rome who were more transiently in Jerusalem than the persons before named as “*dwelling*” there. These were probably there at the feast. They spake the Latin tongue. We suppose that of these pilgrims from Rome, some, who were converted at this time, founded the Church which grew to so much importance there, and to which Paul addressed his letter “to the Romans.” Many Jews had been carried as captives and colonists to Rome at the conquest of Judea shortly before the Christian era, and a separate quarter of the city was assigned to them, as is still the case. The Papal government confines the Jews to this cramped and filthy district of Rome, called the Ghetto, and no Jewish merchant or citizen is allowed by the law to have a residence or shop outside of it. ¶ *Jews and proselytes*. That is, all the people named in the previous list were of two classes, native Jews, born of Jewish parents, and proselytes, or heathen, converted to the Jewish religion. The Jews were noted for “compassing sea and land to make a proselyte.” Matt. 23: 15.

11 Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

11. *Cretes and Arabians.* These were added to the list as a kind of after-thought in the catalogue, and would more regularly have come before the last clause, for these, also, were both of the native and proselyte class—both attending now upon this festival of the Jewish religion. *Crete* is that isle of the sea, in the Mediterranean, now called Candia, about half as large as Palestine, and about 500 miles southwest of Constantinople, and nearly the same distance west from the Syrian coast. Paul touched at this island on his way to Rome, ch. 27 : 7, 8, 13, and Titus was left here to set in order things that were wanting among the Churches, Titus 1 : 5. The inhabitants are spoken of by Paul as notorious for treachery and all immorality, Titus 1 : 12, 13. Their language was probably the Greek. Philo records, that the Jews were numerous in Crete.—*Arabia* is the peninsula in which Mount Sinai is situated, having for its western boundary the Red Sea, and for its eastern, the Persian Gulf and Euphrates. It has the Indian Ocean on the south, and the Holy Land on the north. The Arabic language is akin to the Hebrew, as it is of the same stock; yet it is widely different as a spoken tongue. The district known as Arabia comprised the whole region of Perea, east of the Jordan, stretching north as far as Damascus, into which region Paul is said to have gone after his conversion, (Gal. 2 : 17.) ¶ *We do hear them.* The question in vs. 8 is continued—"How do we hear?" This was the ground of astonishment, that people of these different nations and languages heard these Galileans speaking their tongues, instead of their own peculiar dialect. The wonder of it was, that they heard these men using language perfectly familiar to them all, and all as though these strangers were countrymen of theirs, speaking these strange tongues as fluently as themselves.—We were at Jerusalem at the season correspond-

ing with that of the Passover, when such promiscuous crowds were flocking to the Holy City, from Europe, Asia, Egypt, Abyssinia, and the islands of the sea. There were Russians, Prussians, Italians, Romish sojourners, Greeks, Armenians, people from different parts of Asia Minor, and from the remote East, in various costumes—also, Copts, Congos, Abyssinians and Arabians—quite such a promiscuous gathering as is here named; representing very much the same parts of the world. We saw all colors and shades of complexion mingling in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, kneeling together at the same shrines, and joining in the same processions. And we could imagine what amazement must seize these foreigners of different tongues, if, in any house where one hundred and twenty or more were assembled, they should hear their own languages freely and familiarly spoken by persons from Galilee. At Pentecost they heard this done in a most marvelous way—not here and there a man speaking in a tongue that would be recognized by one of these foreigners, but among them all, this whole list of foreigners heard their own several tongues at the same time. And all the assembly were speaking on the same great theme. There were at least eight or nine tongues spoken, besides the various dialects of different provinces using the same tongue differently. The miracle was manifest. It was plainly connected with the supernatural noise, and the flaming tongues, and none could doubt that something very wonderful had occurred. ¶ *The wonderful works.* Rather, *The great things* of God—as the Incarnation, Resurrection, Ascension and Plan of Salvation by Christ—such as Peter soon after discourses to them. We need not suppose that this speaking was a mere exhortation to these strangers to embrace Christ. It was commenced before they flocked together, and doubtless it consisted of



12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 ¶ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice,

praise and exaltation of God's "great things." So also it occurred, ch. 10 : 46. Yet thus they would publish these great facts to these strangers, (Ps. 51 : 12, 13; Rev. 5 : 13,) and thus propagate the truths of the Gospel in these various tongues, as they could not otherwise so promptly have done. Thus, also, would the Gospel be circulated by these pilgrims and foreigners, to the very ends of the earth.

12. *In doubt.* The term is applied to a state of balancing between different conclusions, as between two roads, which is the right one. They were perplexed—did not know what to make of it. ¶ *What meaneth this?* Literally, *What may this will to be? What may this possibly mean?* This is what the serious, pious portion said, and the language shows how they were already partly convinced of the miracle.

13. *Others mocking.* There were two classes of beholders there, as there are every where: some disposed to take a serious and sensible view of the matter and asking for information; others *mocking—cavilling, scoffing*—turning it to ridicule. ¶ *Full of new wine.* They called the work of the Holy Spirit the work of intoxicating wine. This is only next to making it the work of Beelzebub. How the carnal mind can pervert the highest truths and plainest facts of Christianity. How little power is there in miracles of themselves to convince men, even if one arose to them from the dead! (Luke 16 : 30.) To such an absurd and blasphemous theory are men driven who deny whatever is miraculous and supernatural in Christianity. What wonder that such ridiculous explanations are yet given to the "wonderful works of God" by mocking rationalists. These "others" were probably such native Jews as did not recognize these various tongues; and to them, of course, it seemed a crazy jargon as of drunken men. So,

in 1 Cor. 14 : 23, Paul points out this as the natural effect upon unbelievers, "If, therefore, the whole Church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?" That is, in the case of various tongues being spoken in the hearing of those not familiar with the tongues—just as it would seem to many people here if an assembly were to break out in Hebrew, Arabic, Persian, &c. which they had never heard. ¶ *New wine.* It was not so much "*new*" as *sweet* wine, as the term is. It was often of the last year's vintage, but kept sweet and strong. It was this kind of wine which they preserved from ordinary fermentation, and which they commonly drank in the morning. Some suppose it to have been made of a very sweet small grape, as referred to in Gen. 49 : 11; Isa. 5 : 2. The wines of Jerusalem, as we tasted them, and those of Mt. Lebanon, were "sweet wines," and were so called; being boiled so as to prevent ordinary fermentation, and not regarded as intoxicating except in great excess. They are sweet, like the celebrated classic "Falernian," or "Lachryma Christi," near Naples, but more of a syrup.

#### § 4. THE FIRST PREACHING OF THE APOSTLES.—PETER. VSS. 14–36.

14. Here, then, in the Christian Church, we find the ordinance of public preaching, according to the Apostolic commission, "Go teach all nations"—"preach my gospel to every creature." But we shall see that the Church is not a new Institution, and that this is not the first founding of the Church, for it is "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets together, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone, in whom all the building (of Jew and Gentile walls,) fitly framed together.

and said unto them, Ye men of Judea, and all *ye* that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, <sup>g</sup> seeing it <sup>1</sup> *Thess.* 5:7. is *but* the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

groweth into a holy temple in the Lord." (Eph. 2:21.) ¶ *Peter.* Peter, as perhaps the first specially called to be an Apostle, (Matt. 4:18; Mark 3:5,) and characteristically forward—the Cephas, also, at the bottom of this work, is he by whom Christ here begins to build His Church upon "this rock" of the public confession and preaching of Christ as the Son of the living God. (Matt. 16:13–20.) Yet observe, it is the preaching of great historical facts by which this fundamental truth of Christ is made known. Preaching is originally and properly a publishing of the great facts of the Gospel. ¶ *Standing up.* Boldly, and with all the manly dignity and force which his conviction of the truth gave him. ¶ *With the eleven.* Matthias was now numbered with them—and they all probably rose up as the public, official representatives of this Christianity which was now so slandered. (See vs. 37.) It may be that the twelve spake in the different languages to the same effect. (See vs. 37.) Peter's speech alone is given here, and he was the chief speaker. ¶ *Said unto them.* Rather, *discoursed*, or *delivered an address unto them.* This is the first formal testimony of the Christian Church. It embraces two points. I. The defense from the charge of drunkenness and the true explanation of the phenomena, as the work of the Holy Spirit, (14–20.) II. The proclamation of Christ as the living and glorious source of all this, and the adorable Saviour, (vs. 21,) risen from the death to which they had cruelly consigned Him. (22–36.) ¶ *Ye men of Judea.* Literally, *Men, Jews.* Native Jews; as in ch. 1:11, "Men, Galileans." These are first addressed in keeping with the command to go first to the lineal descendants of Abraham, (ch. 1:4,) the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ¶ *All ye that dwell at Jerusalem.* This is said to

include others who were then dwelling at Jerusalem—not Jews, but proselytes—from foreign parts. "All ye" dwellers or sojourners here, as well as the native Jews who were born of Jewish parents. ¶ *Hearken.* Literally, *give ear to.* Attentively listen to.

15. *For these.* Peter cannot intend here that only the Disciples and not the Apostles themselves had spoken with tongues—for in vs. 4 all are included. But he stands out from the body of Disciples "with the eleven" as the official leaders and apologists of the Church—"the twelve" of God's Israel—according to the ancient patriarchal number, and thus calculated to impress and conciliate these Jews. ¶ *As ye suppose—assume.* ¶ *Seeing.* Literally, *for.* He gives the reason why. ¶ *The third hour.* This was nine o'clock in the morning by our time. The Jews divided the natural day into twelve hours from sunrise to sunset. The third, sixth and ninth hours were devoted to public worship. The civil day, as used in their common reckoning, was from six in the evening till six the next evening, and not from midnight to midnight, as the Roman day and ours. The utter improbability of their being intoxicated at this hour was, 1st. From the rule among the Jews not to eat or drink before morning prayer. (*Derach*, 28:2.) The fourth hour (ten o'clock) was the hour for breakfast. 2d. From the improbability in any case, of men being intoxicated at so early an hour. See 1 Thess. 5:7; Isa. 5:11. 3d. From the fact that the "sweet wine" would intoxicate only when taken to great excess.

16. *This is that, &c.* This is the very thing predicted by the prophet Joel eight centuries before. They knew the prophecy full well. The Old Testament prophets pointed forward to this very time and event. The Old Tes-

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 44: 3.  
<sup>b</sup> Ezek. 11: 16,  
 and 36: 27.  
<sup>c</sup> Joel 2: 28, 29.  
<sup>d</sup> Zech. 12: 10.  
<sup>e</sup> John 7: 38.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 10: 45.  
<sup>g</sup> ch. 21: 9.

17 <sup>a</sup>And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, <sup>b</sup>I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and <sup>c</sup>your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

tament religion was a religion of the future. This would be calculated to convince the serious Jews. See Joel 2: 28-32. This citation was the more striking and impressive as these words of the prophet had just been read in the Pentecostal service of the synagogue.

17. *In the last days.* In the original it reads "*after these things*"—a general expression pointing to an indistinct future. Peter, under the inspiration of God, defines it, by so altering the language in the quotation as to read "*in the last days*"—by which he shows that this is the last Dispensation—and that this advent and outpouring of the Spirit is the beginning of the end. In vs. 29 accordingly, this is connected with the dissolution of the world as the completion of "the last days." Peter thus expounds the language of the prophet so as to fix the reference to that time of Pentecost, as the time of the Messiah and the closing Dispensation to which their prophets so often referred, Isa. 2: 2; Mic. 4: 1. See 2 Tim. 3: 1; Heb. 1: 2. This phrase was so familiar as applying to "the Gospel times," that Peter would not be understood as meaning that the world was just now coming to an end—but that now had commenced the train of events belonging to the closing dispensation, which should conclude with the dissolution of the world. Hence, also, our Saviour used the expression, "*the last day*," for the closing day of all—the day of judgment, John 6: 39, 40; 11: 21; 12: 48.—If, then, these closing times have commenced, these cavillers might well tremble at these tokens, while to this Christian assembly the dawning of these last times is full of blessedness; because, as Peter will show, (vs. 21,) there is a way of escape from the wrath to come. ¶ *I will pour out.* The gift of the Spirit was often represented by

the prophets under this figure of water (as rain) poured out, "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high and the wilderness become a fruitful field." See Prov. 1: 23; Isa. 45: 3; Zech. 12: 10. So it is called by our Lord a baptizing with the Holy Ghost. And speaking of the blessings of Messiah's reign it is said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass and as showers that water the earth." So in Titus 3: 5-6, "The renewing of the Holy Ghost which He shed on us abundantly." ¶ *My Spirit.* The Holy Spirit—the Third Person of the blessed Trinity—is here referred to. He is called God's Spirit, and "the Spirit of Christ." (1 Peter 1: 11.) He would pour out of the Ascension gifts received by Christ, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Ps. 68: 18; Eph. 4: 8. And this outpouring of the Spirit would be in different measures at different times under the Gospel, until at length it should be universal. ¶ *Upon all flesh.* The Spirit was promised to be outpoured upon all classes of men and nations, not upon all without exception—but upon all without distinction. The time has yet to come when this prediction will be more fully realized and exhausted, and when "all flesh shall see the salvation of God." ¶ *Your sons, &c.* The blessing was to come upon their households. This was according to the Abrahamic covenant, and so it was realized in the family of Cornelius the jailor, Lydia, Timothy, &c. So Peter further declares "the promise is unto you and to your children." So it was promised, "I will pour out my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring. And they shall spring up as among the grass, &c." Isa. 44: 3, 4. So Malachi also prophesies, "And he shall turn the hearts of the fathers unto the children, &c." ¶ *Shall prophesy.* Females shared in

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; <sup>1</sup>and they shall prophesy: 1 ch. 21: 4, 9, 10.  
1 Cor. 12: 10,  
28, & 14: 1, &c.

these remarkable influences of the Spirit, as in case of Philip the Evangelist, who had four daughters that prophesied—ch. 21: 9. Under the Old Testament, Miriam, Deborah, Huldah and Anna were prophetesses. (Exodus 15: 20; Judg. 4: 4; Luke 2: 36.) In the Church of Corinth women seem to have shared in the gift of prophecy, (1 Cor. 11: 5,) though they were not allowed to speak in public, (1 Cor. 14: 34.) The word has divers senses, as (1) to foretell future events, (2) to teach the doctrines and duties of religion, as the prophets of old. In this sense it seems to be understood in 1 Cor. 14th ch., including also (3) the public praises of God—while it is there distinguished from speaking in foreign tongues. 1 Cor. 14: 2-5; 1 Cor. 12: 10. It was doubtless a special influence of the Spirit which carried with it strong convincing evidence of power from above, whether in singing praises, or in instructive speech, or both. ¶ *Your young men, &c.* In the Hebrew, the order of these clauses is inverted, and “the old men dreaming dreams” comes first. The Apostles were young men, and Peter refers to them first, as meeting the case more directly. ¶ *Visions.* God often revealed Himself to the prophets by visions. Hence they were formerly called *seers*. The Divine revelation was made to the spirit of the prophet, so that the scene seemed to pass before him. To Joel, the outpouring of the Spirit appears as a general extension of the three forms of Divine revelation, which occur in the Old Testament. Hence, Isaiah *saw the vision* concerning Judah. Ezekiel beheld the vision of dry bones, (37: 8.) Micah saw the word of the Lord, (1: 1,) and Habakkuk saw the burden. So in the New Testament, John in the Revelation bears record of “all things that he saw.” Rev. 1: 2. The Prophet was in an ecstasy. The Lord spake “to Ananias *in a vision*,” ch. 9: 10.

Saul “*saw in a vision*” a man named Ananias. Cornelius “saw in a vision” an angel of God coming to him, ch. 10: 3. ¶ *Dream dreams.* Another mode of Divine revelation was by dreams, in which God suspended the personal consciousness and made the scenes pass before the mind just as when we dream. Such prophetic dreams were had by Jacob, Solomon, Daniel, and others in the Old Testament. Joseph, the husband of Mary, received a revelation in a dream. Matt. 1: 20; 2: 19; see Gen. 20: 3; 31: 11; 31: 24; 37: 5; 40: 5; 41: 1-7; 1 Kings 3: 5. The idea here intended is that God would reveal Himself to all classes without distinction of age, or sex, or rank, or nation, sons and daughters, young and old, servants and handmaids, of all flesh.

18. *And.* Rather, *And even.*—The Hebrew reads, “upon the servants,” Gal. 3: 28; Coloss. 3: 11. “There is neither bond nor free.” The Septuagint and Vulgate give, however, the same rendering as Peter—or rather, Peter quoting from the Greek version, as most familiar to the dispersed Jews and those of Jerusalem, would naturally give it as found there, especially if this contained a sentiment more fully suiting its application to that time. And as he spake by inspiration, Peter’s alteration would give only a further unfolding of the inspired sentiment. All classes are here designated as alike belonging to God and all equally His servants, 1 Cor. 7: 22. “The Lord’s freeman”—“Christ’s servant.” Some understand this clause as referring to ministers, or worshipers of God. But the former is the best suited to the connection. The prophet evidently refers to persons of servile condition, and the Apostle merely adds the pronoun which designates them, however humble in life, as the Lord’s, who would vouchsafe his special grace to them; so that, though the servitude to man might continue, it would merge

*m Joel 2: 30, 31.* 19 <sup>m</sup> And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

and be forgotten in the honorable, filial servitude to their Heavenly Father,

19. He goes on to show that this prophecy of Joel also calls for grievous visitations, which, therefore, they were to expect. These predicted blessings upon the Church are to be accompanied by judgments upon the ungodly world, and both for the upbuilding of His kingdom. The reference first and immediately is to the destruction of Jerusalem, and next to the destruction of the world. The prophecy was not exhausted by what occurred in those Apostolic days, but remained to be fulfilled more completely in the last day. That outpouring of blessing, and of judgment, was only the beginning of the end. The fearful portents belonging to the closing up of temporal affairs, are immediately connected with the opening of this dispensation of the Spirit—for these were the two covers of the book—as these were the two halves of Christ's ministry—gathering His wheat and burning up His chaff. The connection between the time of vengeance and the day of Redemption is indicated, Isa. 59: 16, 18; Isa. 63: 4; Luke 21: 22, 28. He now proceeds to show that these prodigies which they saw, were part of what was contemplated by Joel's prophecy, and were thus to be explained, as Divine manifestations. ¶ *Shew wonders.* Literally, *I will give portents*, or prodigies. [The word here used, *τερατα*, is one of three terms employed in the New Testament to denote *miracles*. Sometimes it is used together with the word for *signs*, (*σημεια*), and they are then rendered “signs and wonders,” Matt. 24: 24; Mark 13: 22; John 4: 48. The other term, which is most commonly rendered “miracles,” is *δυνάμεις*—“powers”—because they are wrought by Divine power—while *τερατα*, “prodigies,” is used of miracles, because they are inexplicable to men, and *σημεια*, “signs,” because they are *signs*, or tokens of the Divine presence, and

thus are seals of the Divine mission of those who work them. So Nicodemus inferred. “No man can do these ‘signs’ miracles that thou doest except God be with him,” John 3: 2. In chap. 2: 22, Peter takes the same ground, viz.: Miracles, “wonders and signs” were sufficient attestations of one's Divine mission and claims. Hence the doctrine held by some, that miracles only bespeak a hearing for him who works them, and that he must first show that his doctrine and aim are good, before the miracles can prove his Divine commission, is fallacious. Miracles are granted just for the purpose of proving his doctrine to be good, and worthy of acceptance as from God. And if by a miracle we understand a work which requires Divine power, the case is clear that a miracle can be wrought only as a Divine attestation. And if we should not call a work of Satan, however marvelous, a “miracle,” or a “sign,” or a “wonder,” in the New Testament sense, then there is no ground for this theory that we must wait till we know about the doctrine that is to be confirmed by it, before we can tell whether the miracle is wrought by God or by Satan.] The ancient belief was, that wonders in the natural world, such as earthquakes, eclipses, &c., were tokens of the Divine wrath. This may have been gathered from the plagues of Egypt, Exod. 10: 21. Similar language is used in Matt. 24, in reference to the last day. ¶ *Signs*—*σημεια*. Moses was furnished with *τερατα*, (prodigies,) which served as *σημεια*—signs of the Divine presence, and credentials of his mission, Exod. 4: 1-8. These wonders in the heavens above, here promised, were to be accompanied with signs—tokens in the earth beneath—and they are described in the following terms. Such wonders and signs, to some extent, attended the destruction of Jerusalem, as described by Josephus. But more especially they will mark the last day. The pro-

20 "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: ⁿ Matt. 24: 29.  
Mark 13: 24  
Luke 21: 25.

21 And it shall come to pass, *that* °whosoever shall call ⁱ Rom. 10: 13. on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

phetic vision contemplates them both as merging into one. At Pentecost a series of wonders commenced, which looked forward to the second coming of Christ. ¶ *Blood and fire.* Some understand this to refer to bloodshed and conflagration. These terms predict calamities, such as were generally supposed to be indicated by such portents. It is not meant that such signs may themselves be expected, but rather the events which they foretold. ¶ *Vapor of smoke.* Dense smoke—in Hebrew, "Pillars of smoke," or columns of it darkening the sky—even blackening the sun. *Dr. Thomson* suggests that the allusion here may be to the *sirocco*, or sand-storm of the desert, which has such phenomena.—*The Land and the Book*, p. 311.

20. *The sun, &c.* These figures were often used by the prophets, Ezek. 32: 7; Isa. 13: 10; Amos 5: 18–20. They are commonly employed to denote great and afflictive changes in governments, as gloomy as if the sun were turned to darkness, and as bloody as if the moon were turned to blood. See Rev. 8: 8, where John saw the same vision. Here, doubtless, the downfall of the Jewish State is primarily signified; and further on, it points to the dissolution of despotic worldly governments, such as are hostile to Christ's cause. Such events are intimated, also, by the same terms, in Matt. 24: 20, "The powers of heaven shall be shaken." ¶ *Notable.* The Greek term *ἐπιφανή*—*epiphane*—means *manifest*—*epiphanous*—or *illustrious*: signal in its character as an exhibition of Divine justice. It will be a day of revelation, Matt. 25. "The Son of man shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, taking vengeance, &c." The Hebrew term in Joel means fearful. This "*day of the Lord*," often spoken of in the Scriptures, may

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refer to any day of judicial infliction, but always looks forward, more or less distinctly, to the final day of His wrath. It was here seen by Peter as the proper close of these last days which have now begun, and hence he warns the people of the solemn and awful times upon which they had entered. "His fan is in His hand," and His judgment is already going on, in preparation for the final, universal trial. Hence, the Apostles spoke of that closing event—His final judgment—as at hand. If they even expected the second coming of Christ very soon, (which is not certain,) this would not at all affect the authority of their inspired writings on the subject, for they spake in words which the Holy Ghost taught them, and it was only in accordance with the declarations of Christ, Matt. 24: 36. The beginning of the end had already taken place. They were living in the last times! The "coming" at the destruction of Jerusalem was immediately at hand, to be succeeded by the time of waiting for Christ, (as known to the Father only, Mark 13: 32,) till all things shall have been put under His feet. Then the tokens shall be repeated with fuller and more signal manifestation, and the day of the Lord shall arrive.

21. *Whosoever.* Meanwhile, during these latter days of portent, all of which point on to the hastening end, this is the covenant of the Spiritual dispensation, that whosoever—Jew or Gentile, bond or free—shall call upon the name of the Lord, as the Messiah made known by the prophets, (see Rom. 10: 11–14, and 1 Cor. 1: 2,) and with a reliance on Him as made known in the Gospel, in His revealed character and office-work, as God in Christ the Saviour—shall be saved. So in Genesis 4: 26, it is recorded, "Then began men to call on the name of Jehovah," or

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you <sup>by miracles</sup> and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know:

<sup>John 8: 2, and 14: 10, 11, ch. 10: 38, Heb. 2: 4.</sup>

by the name Jehovah, Lord. This cannot denote the beginning of public worship, for it had begun before. But it must refer to the invocation of God under a special name "Jehovah," or His name, as that whereby He makes Himself known: His revealed name—thus acknowledging the attributes which He claims, and calling upon Him in the way and according to the plan prescribed in His Word. ¶ *The Lord.* This term is almost universally used in the New Testament to designate Christ as the Second Person of the Godhead: and it is the term which is employed in the Greek version of the Old Testament to translate "Jehovah." This is a strong verbal proof of Christ's Godhead. The passage in Gen. 4: 26, agrees well with this. ¶ *Shall be saved.* Salvation is proclaimed in Christ to all people. This is the glory of the latter times. It is not to any exclusive pale of a nation or a denomination, but to individuals—"whosoever will." Yet all who truly call upon the name of Christ will call upon Him as Prophet, Priest and King—will receive Him in all His offices in which he acts for the government and salvation of men, and will come unto Him, and embrace Him by faith for salvation. This is the invitation—"Look unto Me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." (Isa. 45: 22.) Peter thus prepares them to hear who is the Lord who is to be called on for salvation. OBSERVE.—(1) If such are thus to be saved, all others who refuse to call upon Christ and embrace His offered salvation, must be lost. "Neither is there salvation in any other—for there is no other name given under Heaven among men, whereby we must be saved." (ch. 4: 12.) (2) Peter proclaims the coming wrath in preparation for the preaching of Christ the Saviour.

22 Peter now goes on to proclaim

Jesus of Nazareth as "the Lord" spoken of by Joel,—the only hope in the coming times of trouble, and the Christ the Messiah of their prophecies and hopes as a nation. Peter goes on to prove this great truth of Jesus' exaltation as Lord and Messiah, from three considerations. I. The miraculous attestation and approval of Jesus, by God, through signs and wonders, &c. (vs. 22.) II. The Resurrection of Jesus. (vss. 24–32.) III. The gift of the Holy Spirit (vss. 33–35,) from Him as the Risen Lord. For the 1st, He appeals to their knowledge of the facts, "as ye yourselves also know." (vs. 22.) For the 2d, he shows that whatever they might have thought of His death it was provided by God, and His Resurrection by God the Father proved His Divine origin and mission—as it set the seal of the Godhead upon His Life and Death, indorsing all his claims. For the 3d, he points them to what is now passing before their eyes as the proof that He is risen, and that this which they now see and hear He hath shed forth. ¶ *Ye men of Israel—ye Jews.* Whether native or foreign. ¶ *Jesus of Nazareth.* This was the familiar title of our Lord, which went with Him to His cross, as was predicted, "He shall be called a Nazarene." (Matt. 2: 23.) This title, which was given Him in reproach, Peter uses in this first preaching of His name. See John 18: 5–7. See ch. 22: 8; 26: 9. ¶ *Approved.* Rather, *demonstrated, accredited unto you*—shown to be that which He claimed to be. (See vs. 19, note.) ¶ *Of God.* It was important in arguing with the Jews to show that Jesus had the authoritative commission of the Father, whom they professed to worship. This was the point which Christ Himself constantly urged with them. (See John 5: 19, 30, 36.) ¶ *Which God did.* None but God could have done these miracles—as the raising of Jairus'

23 Him, <sup>q</sup>being delivered by the determinate counsel <sup>q</sup>Matt. 26: 24.  
and foreknowledge of God, <sup>r</sup>ye have taken, and by wicked <sup>r</sup>Luke 22: 22, <sup>an</sup>  
hands have crucified and slain : <sup>24: 44.</sup>  
<sup>28.</sup> ch. 3: 18, and 41  
<sup>r</sup>ch. 5: 39.

daughter and Lazarus, as well as of the widow's son; besides giving the blind sight by a word, &c. So Nicodemus admitted, for himself as a ruler of the Jews, and for others, John 3: 2. It is idle to say that such miracles were attested by His doctrine and thus only were shown to be from God, and not from Satan—for Satan could not have wrought them—and if he could, then they would have been in themselves no attestation of Jesus as the Christ. And further, if we must wait to know of the doctrine whether it is good, before we can tell whether the miracle is from God or from Satan, when it is the worthiness and Divinity of the doctrine which we want to have attested by the miracle—then, how shall we know about the doctrine independently of the miracle which attests it? If we could, we should not need the miracle, for then we should know beforehand just what it comes to attest to us—and then, too, the miracle would have no important end to serve, and could be dispensed with. **OBSERVE.**—Peter here shows that the whole course of the man Christ Jesus was ordained and carried through by the direct agency and authority of the God of Israel. ¶ *Yourselves also.* As well as we—or as in fact you know without being told. These facts He brings up to them as well known to themselves. The Jews did not dispute His miracles. They rather admitted them, but either ascribed them to the agency of Beelzebub, (Matt. 9: 34; Mark 3: 22,) or found fault with Him as breaking the Sabbath by working them. (John 5: 16.)

23. *Him*—*This one*—emphatic: *the very one so divinely attested*, to their certain knowledge. ¶ *Being delivered*—ἐκδοτον—*delivered up*. The term, in this form, is used only here. The verb is used in the New Testament of *letting out a vineyard*, and in no other sense. Here it conveys the idea of His being put into their hands by the voluntary

plan of the Father. It was by no chance nor compulsion. He was not wrested from the Father's hands. He Himself was voluntary in it all. **OBSERVE.**—"Because the cross of Christ doth commonly trouble us at first sight, Peter declares to them that He suffered nothing by chance, nor because He wanted power to deliver Himself, but because it was so determined (and appointed) by God. For this knowledge alone, that the death of Christ was ordained by the eternal counsel of God, did cut off all occasion of foolish and wicked reflections, and did prevent all offenses which might otherwise be conceived."—*Calvin*. To the Jews the cross was a stumbling-block and an offense. They could not be reconciled to so shameful a death for the Messiah. They even at length invented the doctrine of two Messiahs—a suffering one and a victorious one. In no other way could they satisfy the plain predictions of their Scriptures. But they did not see as we do, how both these features meet in one and the same Jesus of Nazareth. ¶ *By the determinate counsel.* *By the definite (will) plan* of God, or in accordance with that plan. God works according to a plan. Hence the Atonement itself is definite and particular—not general without a plan—nor universal without a principle—but well defined in its application and execution. The verb is elsewhere rendered, "ordained"—"declared"—"limiteth." See Acts 10: 42; Rom. 1: 4; Heb. 4: 7. It means something fixed. "He hath determined the times before appointed," &c. "He limiteth a certain day," &c. The dative has here the adverbial force, and indicates the cause or rule—in either case referring the transaction to the definite, particular purpose of God to this effect. "The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him," &c., Luke 22: 22, 23. This remark is now understood by Peter, as it was not when it was uttered. Whether the



act of delivering up be referred to Judas' betraying Christ, or God the Father giving Him into the hands of His betrayers, it is clearly attributed to the definite purpose of God—and this properly puts a new aspect upon it in the sight of these Jews to whom the cross was an offense. This shameful death, which seemed so inconsistent with the dignity of their Messiah, was in accordance with the previous and settled design of God. See John 19 : 10, 11; 10 : 18. ¶ *And foreknowledge.* "That Peter may teach that the counsel of God is not without reason, he couplcth also therewith His foreknowledge." "God's works of providence, wherein He executeth His decrees, are His most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions." His foreknowledge is not alone, nor is His counsel alone. It is neither without the other, but both concurring in the event and all the means by which it was brought about. All the steps were as much ordained and foreknown as the event itself. The event could not have been foreknown by God except as it was fixed. Nor was it foreknown merely as another's act uncontrollable, but as planned and provided for by Himself. It was, therefore, a wise foreknowledge, compassing all that belonged to it, with all the results, and arranging all the particulars, so that He was not disappointed or baffled in any thing. Nor can He ever be thwarted by wicked men, however dark and deep their plots against His cause. "His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure," Isa. 46 : 10. ¶ *Ye have taken—Having taken.* God's secret decree did not make it any the less their free act. He now charges upon them their own voluntary deed. They found no excuse in the doctrine of decrees preached by Peter. They knew they had acted without compulsion and according to their own impulse and choice. They had cried, "Away with Him, crucify Him," and probably some of those very persons were among Peter's hearers. And the Jews generally, "men of Israel," had

fully indorsed the foul crucifixion. OBSERVE.—Some men will have us deny that God decrees all things, or that He has any fixed and eternal plan, lest sinners make this a ground of excuse. But Peter preached the doctrine so as to exalt God, and to humble men by the conviction that it is vain to fight against God, and that no plots of the wicked, or of Satan himself, can circumvent or disappoint God. ¶ *By wicked hands.* Literally, *By the hands of lawless ones*—(ἀνόμων—wicked)—the Roman soldiers—the heathen—outlaws. This made the death of Christ more ignominious, that it was by heathen hands. The Jews had urged Pilate to put Him to death, contrary to his own convictions of His innocence—so that they had done it, through the Romans. They had not the right to put any one to death at that time. The sceptre had thus far departed from Judah, as the Shiloh had come. Besides, the ignominious punishment of crucifixion was owing to the heathen having done it. Yet for all this, the Jews were responsible, as Pilate would have released Him but for them. ¶ *Have crucified.* Literally, *Having nailed Him up*, (i. e. to the cross,) *ye slew Him*. This unusual term is here employed to express the harshness and cruelty of the deed. Truly, it was a heathenish punishment—which the Jewish law would not tolerate. It was, indeed, by the hands of the lawless. They were lawless in the sight of the Jews, as being Gentiles—but they were more truly lawless in this crucifixion of our Lord. OBSERVE.—(1) The doctrine of God's decrees is everywhere taught in the Scriptures, and it is a doctrine which exalts God to His proper control and government of the universe. (2) This is more than mere *foreknowledge*—and even foreknowledge implies something already fixed, else it could not be foreknown. (3) In this first Apostolic preaching the doctrine of the Divine decrees is boldly proclaimed, and it ought not to be covered up or kept back. (4) It is here preached in order to produce conviction. It is calculated

24 \*Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.

¶ *vs. 32.*  
 ch. 3: 15, and 4: 10, and 10: 40; and 13: 30-34, and 17: 31.  
 Rom. 4: 24, and 8: 11.  
 1 Cor. 6: 14.

to make the sinner tremble, when he finds himself in the hands of such a God—Omniscient—Sovereign—Almighty. (5) It is also calculated to encourage him that this throne is “the throne of grace.” Hence, they who refrain from preaching this doctrine, for fear that the sinner may frame an excuse from it, reject this Scriptural example, and follow their own device. (6) The preaching of God’s decrees, not as a mere theological point, but as a practical matter, showing the greatness of the God against whom they had freely, and willfully, and awfully sinned, resulted in the conviction of these multitudes. It was the Scriptural truth which the Holy Spirit blessed to their conversion. (7) We see that God’s decreeing any act of men does not fix the act alone, but takes in all the circumstances leading to the act, from the very beginning. And part of the decree is, that the sinner shall act in pursuance of his own choice—without compulsion. Hence, there can be no less sinfulness in the deed, on account of the decree of God, since He decreed that it should be done freely and from choice. The actors in this awful crime were not conscious of being moved to do it contrary to their will. It was done by their own impulse. They knew this to be so, and hence they make no excuse on the ground of God’s decree, though it was so boldly admitted and preached by Peter. The sinner is fully responsible for his sins, yet he cannot thwart the plans of God. And the thought of this offended Judge compassing his path and his lying down, and being acquainted with all his ways, might well make him tremble. Yet how encouraging to know that God’s will “is good will to men”—and that while He “will be gracious to whom He will be gracious,” yet He will be gracious to “whosoever will.”

24. The Apostle now urges the second point—that God the Father had

not only predetermined the death of Jesus, (of which they had been the guilty perpetrators,) but had also raised Him from the dead. The Resurrection of Christ set the infallible seal of God upon His claims and His work. Hence it was the great fact of which the Apostles were to be witnesses, and which they were to preach. And here it is pressed as proving to the Jews that Jesus was commissioned by the Father. ¶ *Raised up.* The word here used is the same which in the substantive form means “resurrection,” and it is the raising up from the dead that is here referred to, as is also plain from the connection. He comes afterwards to use this fact in explanation of this miraculous outpouring of the Spirit, verses 32-33. ¶ *Having loosed.* God raised Him up from the grave, *having loosed the cords, or bands of death*, in which the Lord was held captive. The term here rendered *pains*, is translated *sorrows* in Matt. 24, 8, and *travail* in 1 Thess. 5: 3. In the Old Testament it is used to translate the Hebrew word that means (1) *cords*, or bands—and (2) the *pains* of travail. It is found in Ps. 18: 5, in this same connection—“the snares, bands, or pains of death.” And the phrase here is based on this usage of the LXX. so that it would mean the nets or *bands* in which death held the Lord Jesus. See Ps. 116: 3. ¶ *Because.* A reason is here given for this release, that it *was impossible*, according to the plan of God, as it was, indeed, also according to the essential life of Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life, *that he should be holden by it.* It was also impossible, according to the Scriptures. The impossibility did not belong to the peculiar constitution of Christ’s body, nor did it pertain simply to the Divine nature of Christ, for in such case, it would have been equally impossible for Him to die. But, “through death He destroyed him that had the

1 Cor. 15: 15.  
 2 Cor. 4: 14.  
 Gal. 1: 1.  
 Ephes. 1: 20.  
 Col. 2: 12.  
 1 Thess. 1: 10.  
 Heb. 15: 20.  
 1 Pet. 1: 21.  
 † Ps. 16: 8.

25 For David speaketh concerning him, 'I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved :

power of death, that is, the devil." Heb. 2: 14. "He hath the keys of death and of hell." Rev. 1: 18.

25. *For.* The Apostle proceeds here to show the impossibility according to the Scriptures, that Christ should have remained under the power of death. He here proves from the 16th Psalm, that such special exemption from the power of the grave was promised to the Messiah as a high personal peculiarity. This very fact characterized His case, as he goes on to assert, appealing to His fellow Disciples as witnesses of these things. ¶ *Concerning Him—In reference to Him.* There is every reason to suppose that David has the Messiah in mind in this passage. True, the prophets often "searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify when it testified beforehand the suffering of Christ and the glory that should follow." (1 Peter 1: 11.) The passage stands here on record as it was to have its fulfillment in Christ. The Jewish Rabbis who acknowledged the reference of many of the Psalms to the Messiah, did not generally so understand this at that time. David here expresses his high confidence in God's peculiar promises respecting him—stretching as they did to perpetuity. The promise that he should never fail of a son to sit upon his throne he saw fulfilled in Christ, (vs. 30,) and here he spake of Him, yet as though he were speaking of himself. He spake here as a prophet, (vs. 30,) setting forth his great successor, the son of David. All the terms of this prophecy were never fulfilled in David himself, for he saw corruption. Often when he spake of himself, the Spirit of Christ which was in him spake of Christ rather, as He in whom the prediction was most eminently to be fulfilled. Peter shows in vs. 29–31, that this passage could not have referred to David, but to Christ.

And Paul, in ch. 13: 36, takes the same ground, and declares it to have sole reference to the Messiah. There is here, therefore, a direct prophecy of what was so remarkably fulfilled in Jesus, and it is one of the most striking predictions of Holy Writ. ¶ *I foresaw.* This is commonly rendered, "I saw before me"—as being near at hand—a present God—looking unto Him, as my available helper. The Hebrew reads, "I have placed Jehovah always before me." Here the Greek particle in the verb refers rather to time than to place. The latter is expressed in the separate words *ἐνώπιόν μου*. In ch. 21: 29, the same verb is used, and not elsewhere in the New Testament, "For they had seen before with him," &c. where also it refers to *time*, (beforehand.) The Psalmist here intimates that prophetic forecast by which, through the Divine Spirit, He brought Jehovah (Christ) before his face, and thus he expressly declares the prophetic nature of the remarkable passage. It means, "I had vividly present to my mind" by prophetic foresight. ¶ *Always—continually*, as an ever-present God. His faith fixed upon Christ "and He was the end of his conversation, the same yesterday, to-day and forever." (Heb. 13: 8.) ¶ *For—Because.* He now states what he saw in Him to engage his confidence. ¶ *On my right hand.* The right is the position of power and favor. Ps. 73: 23; Ps. 110: 1; Ps. 121: 5. The right side is spoken of as the favorable side, (Luke 1: 11.) He who stands on our right hand is understood to be our dependence and strength. ¶ *That I should not be moved.* This is the effect of such a trust, in the experience of the Psalmist. It keeps him from being seriously disturbed either in his affairs or his feelings. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." (Isa. 26: 3.) Christ

26 Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope:

27 Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

is on our right hand for this purpose, and because he is there, this is the effect upon our mind. The verb is used sixteen times in the New Testament, and in every other case is translated "shaken," except ch. 17: 13, where it is rendered "stirred up."

26. *Therefore.* David here expresses his triumphant confidence and joy in God, as he foresaw Christ in whom the promises to him should be fulfilled. The Hebrew reads, "therefore my heart is glad." ¶ *My tongue.* Hebrew, *my glory*—meaning the soul, which they thus spoke of as their proper glory. And the *tongue*, as giving expression to the soul, is here substituted, while the sense is the same. (See Ps. 30: 12.)

¶ *Was glad* — *was exceeding glad.*

¶ *Moreover also.* Literally, *But further also.* This is the climax. Heb. *Yea, surely.* ¶ *My flesh.* My body, as distinct from the soul, with which it is here associated. ¶ *Shall rest.* This term is used elsewhere three times in the New Testament, and in each case of the birds lodging in the branches of a tree. It expresses a secure lodgment—for it has reference to their taking safe shelter there, and yet it carries in the very form of the word the idea of a temporary lodgment; corresponding exactly to the Hebrew term, which is based on the word "tabernacle," and then means "to dwell safely." This describes precisely the Psalmist's idea, that his own flesh should rest in hope—because His greater self—His Divine antitype—the New Testament David, had this full security of a prompt Resurrection. But especially, (2) Christ's flesh should lodge in the grave temporarily, as a bird on the bough, yet securely as safe from corruption, because of this Divine pledge to which he refers. This language, in the lower measure, might be understood of himself, yet it is so connected with the higher and fuller reference to Christ,

to whom alone some of the terms can apply, and who alone can exhaust the meaning, that it shows us David speaking prophetically of Christ, whom he knew as having been promised to him as "the fruit of his loins to sit upon his throne." vss. 30–31.

27. *My soul.* In the Hebrew this term is commonly used for *myself*—*my life*, but in an emphatic sense. The meaning of this clause is, "Thou wilt not leave, or rather, give up, abandon me—myself, to hell." ¶ *In hell.* Rather, *to the dark abode of the dead.* The Hebrew term does not mean the grave. There is another word for that. This is a general term, and denotes the invisible world of the dead, without reference to the happiness or misery. The Hebrew term means the pit, as a general receptacle or place of the dead. The Greek term means originally a dark region, where disembodied spirits were believed to dwell. There is another term in both languages for "hell," as a place of fiery punishment, *γέεννα*, Gehenna, Matt. 5: 22; Luke 12: 5. In the Revelation the phrase is "death and hell." Rev. 1: 18; 6: 8; 20: 13, 14. In Luke 16: 23, where it is used of the rich man, the general term is defined, "In hell he lifted up his eyes, *being in torments.*" In the world of spirits he was in torments. Here, however, it is to be understood in the general sense. "Thou wilt not leave me among the dead." This was the triumphant confidence expressed by the Psalmist, with special and prophetic application, however, to Christ, who was to come from his loins, and who was, therefore, at that time in his loins, as "Levi was in the loins of Abraham, when Melchizedek met him." ¶ *Not suffer* — *allow, permit, give up.* ¶ *Thine Holy One*—*οσιόν σου.* Some read this in the plural, (in the Hebrew,) as though it were "*thy holy ones.*" But the Jews who denied the

28 Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

*¶ Or, I may.*

29 Men and brethren, || let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

reference to Christ, would have a motive for so altering the text. Yet, if we read it in the plural, it only embraces God's people with Christ as included in Him, and sharers of His Resurrection. The term means rather, "*Thy beloved one*," or favorite, corresponding thus with the phrase "beloved Son," as applied to Christ in the New Testament. It is used, however, rather as the personally Holy One, as in Heb. 7 : 26, "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners." Rev. 15 : 4, "For thou only art holy." When the devils speak of Christ as "the Holy One of God," a different term is used, meaning originally "separated to a sacred use"—consecrated—set apart—expressing official holiness, while the term here used denotes rather, personal holiness. David here loses himself in Christ. *¶ To see corruption.* That is, to experience putrefaction, rottenness, such as is naturally experienced in the grave. The confidence is, that God would not give Him up to the world of spirits—nor permit His Holy One (Jesus,) to remain so long in the grave as to see or experience decay. Of course, it was a prompt and triumphant Resurrection that was predicted for David's greater Son; and it was by this means that the promise was to be fulfilled to him of not failing of a son to sit on his throne, (vs. 30.) This clause could not possibly apply to David himself personally, (Job 19 : 26.)

28. *Thou hast made known.* Hebrew, *Thou wilt make known.* This refers to the Resurrection of Christ (vs. 30,) as future in the eye of the Psalmist, but as past in the eye of the Apostle. Under the same Spirit of Inspiration, this appropriate variation is made, to express the more advanced sense as now actually fulfilled. *¶ The ways of life.* The way by a blessed and glori-

ous Resurrection from the dead, to life in the highest sense. This is the sense in which Peter understood the Old Testament passage, and he spake under the guidance of the Spirit. And this was the way, also, for His people. "Christ is the Resurrection and the Life." The way was shown, or made known to Christ by personal experience, as no one before Him had trodden that way by which He found out eternal redemption for us, Heb. 9 : 12. *¶ Full of joy with thy countenance.* In the Hebrew, "*Fullness of joy before thy face*—pleasures at thy right hand for evermore." This is the blessed hope of Ascension and a blessed life beyond the Resurrection. In the mouth of the Messiah this expresses His confidence in "the joy that was set before Him," the happy anticipation of which led Him to "endure the cross, despising the shame," (Heb. 12 : 2.) It was a fullness of joy from the Divine Presence. He is "set down on the right hand of the throne of God." In a smaller measure and in Christ, every Christian may say, "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness," Ps. 17 : 15. Christ will welcome each to "enter into the joy of his Lord," Matt. 25 : 21 : Eph. 1 : 20-22.

29. The Apostle proceeds now to show the application of this prophetic passage to Christ, on the ground that it cannot apply to David personally, and can have its fulfillment exhausted only in Christ. *¶ Men and brethren—* Lit., *Men* (who are) *brethren*, according to the flesh—brothers—Israelites. This application is introduced in a most conciliatory way. *¶ Let me, &c.* Rather, *It is lawful—I may properly speak.* *¶ Freely.* Rather, *with boldness*, with freedom—without any charge of disrespect to David. Great and honored as David confessedly was, yet he was admitted to be *dead and buried*, and re-

39 Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne;

remaining in his sepulchre without having had a Resurrection. He calls him here, "the *Patriarch David*," out of highest respect. The title was commonly applied to the twelve patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, &c., as founders and fathers of the nation, Heb. 7: 4; Ex. 7: 8, 9. Peter gives this title to David as the most illustrious head of the nation, its most glorious king—the founder of the royal line. He was, also, the most exalted type of Christ, the lineal father of the man Christ Jesus, though he called Him Lord. ¶ *Dead and buried.* The fact is recorded in the Old Testament. From 1 Kings 2: 10, and Heb. 3: 16, we learn that David was buried at Jerusalem, in the city of David, on Mount Zion, the stronghold of Zion, 2 Sam. 5: 7. The kings were commonly buried there. The tomb of the kings is now shown outside the city. Jerome speaks of David's tomb on Mount Zion as having been visited in his time, in the 4th century. Josephus says that it was robbed of its treasures by Hyrcanus, the high-priest, who took out of it three thousand talents. Herod afterwards further despoiled it. But Peter appealed to their well-established belief that David had not risen. Hence the passage could apply not to David personally, but to Christ. The patriarch, who died over a thousand years before, had seen corruption. According to the Apostolic interpretation, a class of prophecies which might seem to refer to David are understood as fulfilled in Christ. The building up of the Christian Church is the building up of the tabernacle of David, &c., ch. 15: 15-17.

30. Peter now shows how David could have spoken in this way, and how his language is to be understood. It is a prophetic reference to Christ. First of all, David was a *Prophet*—a foreteller of future events under Di-

vine inspiration. Hence, he was able to predict this of one who was to come so long after him. If he had not been a prophet, he could not have referred in this passage to Christ. That he was inspired, Christ Himself declares. (Mark 12: 36.) See also 2 Sam. 7: 12; 23: 2. See ch. 1: 16; 4: 25, where the Holy Ghost is said to have spoken by the mouth of David. ¶ *And knowing.* It had been made known to him by God in the promise. He was sure that God had sworn with an oath to him that he should never fail to have a son to sit upon his throne. See 2 Sam. 7: 12-16, where he received this information from the prophet Nathan. See Ps. 132: 11; 89: 35-37. Besides this, he knew as a prophet that this was to be fulfilled in Christ, and he foresaw this very event of Christ's Resurrection, vs. 31. In Ps. 89: 3-4, this covenant is distinctly recorded. He knew that it was to be of the fruit of his loins—that is, of his lineal descendants according to the flesh. Solomon was his immediate son and successor; and some passages which refer directly to Solomon are applied in a further and fuller sense to Christ. (Heb. 1: 5.) Christ was descended from David according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit he was of a higher nature, and was "declared to be the Son of God with power by His Resurrection from the dead." Rom. 1: 3-4. ¶ *Raise up Christ.* David plainly looked forward to the coming Messiah, as we see from the more explicit Messianic Psalms—as Ps. 2, 110, 22, 72, 45, 16, 40. Some editions leave out these words as not found in some MSS. and found in others with so many variations as to make it possibly a marginal note of explanation that has crept in the text. In such case it would read "that God had sworn with an oath to him from the fruit of his loins that there should sit upon his throne." In the nex

¶ Ps. 16: 10.  
ch. 13: 35.

31 He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, \* that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

¶ vs. 24.  
α ch. 1: 8.

32 \* This Jesus hath God raised up, \* whereof we all are witnesses.

verse it is plainly declared that David foresaw Christ as promised here, and thus spake in this prophetic Psalm of His Resurrection. The Jews in the time of our Lord so understood the Old Testament predictions, and looked for the Messiah to come from the family of David. The children had been so instructed that they sang hosannas to Him as "the son of David." (Mark 11: 9.) See Matt. 12: 23; 21: 9; 22: 42-46; Mark 11: 10; John 7: 42. It was seen that these promises to David could not be exhausted in the case of Solomon, or of any line of successors. And David's kingdom that was to have no end could not be that kingdom which was divided under Rehoboam, and which fell less than 400 years afterwards. It came to be understood as the kingdom of the Messiah which Daniel predicted, which was to be forever. He knew that in that promise Christ was meant, the Messiah of the Old Testament, who was to be raised up especially to occupy the throne of the covenant people. He was to be "raised up" miraculously from the dead for that purpose. Ps. 132: 11; 89: 35-37. As the New Testament Israel are the true people of God, (Rom. 1: 28; 9: 6,) and as the Christian Church is the tabernacle of David, (ch. 15: 15, 17,) so Christ is the successor of David upon his throne. The Apostles and Christ Himself show plainly that this is the interpretation of these Old Testament terms in their New Testament sense, as the Old Testament constantly pointed forward to the New as its substantial explanation and fulfillment.

31. *Seeing this before.* Rather—*foreseeing this.* It is here distinctly declared not only what David spake, to stand on record for future ages, but what he saw beforehand. Unless David had some positive foresight of the Messiah, as referred to in this remark-

able promise, why should it be here so expressly mentioned that he *saw this before?* There is here a repetition of what had just been said in the terms, "being a prophet and knowing." He knew by the spirit of prophecy, by which he spake, as the prophets did not always know. It is not necessary to suppose that David had a clear foresight of all the particulars of Christ's Resurrection, but as he was searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in him did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, the event itself seems to have been disclosed to him through these remarkable words. ¶ *That His soul.* The soul of Christ—the Messiah—and not that of David.

32. What David thus foresaw had indeed come to pass. *This Jesus* (who is thus proved to be the Messiah of the Old Testament,) *hath God raised up* according to the promise, and according to David's substantial foresight of the case. What was prophecy had now become history. Jesus of Nazareth was of the lineage of David, and was born in the city of David, according to the predictions respecting the Messiah. And now at length He had been *raised up*, (from the dead,) so as to sit forever on the throne of David—so as to occupy the throne of the true covenant people, as "David their king," Hos. 3: 5; Ezek. 37: 24. ¶ *Whereof. of.* *Of whom—or, of which fact.* It may mean, "*whose witnesses we all are,*" namely, as being the Risen Lord—for He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once, (1 Cor. 15: 6,) including, most probably, this hundred and twenty. This rendering substantially involves the other—"of which fact"—namely, that God had raised up this Jesus from the dead, and thus had put His seal upon His finished work. ¶ *We all*

**33** Therefore <sup>b</sup>being by the right hand of God exalted, and <sup>c</sup>having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he <sup>d</sup>hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear.

<sup>b</sup> ch. 5:31.  
Phil. 2:9.  
Heb. 10:12.  
<sup>c</sup> John 14:26,  
and 15:26, and  
16:7, 13.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 1:4.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. 10:45.  
Eph. 4:8.

Referring first to the Apostles, who were appointed for this very purpose of bearing public testimony to the vital fact of Christ's Resurrection, and then to the company of Disciples who had also seen the Lord. **OBSERVE.**—

(1) This testimony was to a plain matter of fact, as to which they could not have been deceived. Christianity is amply attested as historically true—even in its miraculous features. The Resurrection of Christ was a great miracle, and this fact was witnessed to, so as to be beyond doubt. (2) So many saw and conversed with Christ, after His Resurrection—saw Him eat, and heard Him speak—that the evidence was most conclusive.

**33. Therefore.** Peter comes now to show that the miraculous events of Pentecost were from the Risen Lord, and a proper fruit of His Ascension. From the well attested fact of Christ's Resurrection, the Apostle points to His Ascension as a necessary consequence—showing that—as the Risen Lord, who was raised from the dead in order to be exalted to Heaven—He there, at the right hand on high, had received the very gifts which He dispensed to men, and that this would fully account for all the wonders at Pentecost. ¶ *By the right hand.* The dative here may express either the cause or the locality. In vs. 34, the locality is referred to in the prophecy as though it were meant here. But it is also an important idea, included in this, and elsewhere expressed, that this was done by the God of the Jews, whom they acknowledged and worshiped, and that, therefore, they were bound to own Jesus as their Messiah. ¶ *Exalted.* Christ's exaltation consisteth in His Resurrection and Ascension, as the very opposite of His humiliation. "Him hath God exalted, with His right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to

Israel, and remission of sins," (ch. 5:31.) ¶ *Having received.* So the Psalmist prophetically sings, "Thou hast ascended on high—thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men," Ps. 68:18. The Holy Spirit was promised to Him "without measure," as the fruit of His finished work, and as the result of His glorification, (John 3:34.) "If I depart," said He, "I will send Him unto you." "Whom I will send unto you from the Father." "Whom the Father will send unto you in my name," (John 14:26; 16:26.) This promise was called by Christ, "the promise of the Father," (ch. 1:4.) ¶ *The promise of the Holy Ghost*—means the promised gift of the Holy Spirit to be sent down upon the Church. "It was not yet, (while Christ was on earth,) because He was not yet glorified," (John 7:39.) Its bestowment was dependent upon His exaltation to the right hand on high. He received it accordingly when He ascended, and so also He shed it down. ¶ *Shed forth. Poured out,* (according to the promise, vs. 17.) This was only His dispensing of what He had received, according to the promise of the Father. He had purchased this Divine gift for men, Ps. 68:18. In vs. 17, it is called "*My Spirit.*" Here, "*this*" refers to that gift. And its outpouring thus, as they had seen and heard, was only what was to have been expected, and what had been fully provided for. In vs. 17, it is God who pours it out. Here it is Christ—who is God therefore. ¶ *Which ye.* "Ye" is here emphatic. Their witness also he would thus challenge to the facts. ¶ *See.* This may imply that there was something of the miraculous appearance visible to the multitude—as the tongues of flame. But it is objected, that in such case they could not have attributed the effects to drunkenness, as in vs. 13. The



Ps. 110: 1.  
Matt. 22: 44.  
1 Cor. 15: 25.  
Eph. 1: 20.  
Heb. 1: 13.

34 For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, \*The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

35 Until I make thy foes thy footstool.

36 Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly,

outward effects upon the Disciples were visible, at least; and we rather infer that as the tongues were to be a sign to the unbelieving, the visible symbols would be for them also. And nothing is too unreasonable for unbelieving men to assert, even in the face of miracles, as in vs. 13. ¶ *Hear.* The hearing would refer, of course, to the languages spoken, vs. 8. All these miraculous manifestations, says Peter, have been sent down by Christ Jesus—the Risen Lord.

34. Peter now presses upon them the conclusion, that this outpouring is to be referred to the Resurrection and Exaltation of Christ, which David's prediction in Ps. 110: 1 distinctly contemplated, and the language could not be applied to David himself. ¶ *For.* He goes on to show that Christ is exalted, (vs. 33,) for David is not thus exalted, and Christ alone could be referred to by David in the Psalm. David had, indeed, gone to Heaven, but had not *ascended*, as Christ ascended in his body, nor for this purpose, to be enthroned for the conquest of his enemies, vs. 35. Yet, though this passage has not been fulfilled in the case of David, the Psalmist gives the explanation himself, that it has another and higher fulfillment. ¶ *But he saith himself.* This is what David expressly says, in the Psalm 110: 1. He speaks of Jehovah as saying *unto his* (David's) *Lord*, which was the Messiah, "*Sit thou,*" &c. OBSERVE.—Jesus had used this very passage to confound His enemies, "David therefore himself (He said,) calleth Him *Lord*, and whence is He then his Son?" Mark 13: 36–37. Besides this, Jesus says that David so spake "by the Holy Ghost," which is the same as to say that David was Divinely inspired and spake under the influence of inspiration. Peter shows that David, by this language, called the Messiah his

Lord, and that this was the very same Person whom Jehovah exalted to His right hand, vs. 33—that David therefore looked forward to the glorious exaltation of this Person—his Lord, who was also his Son—and that this is fulfilled only in Christ Jesus. Therefore, it is clear from his own words, that David acknowledged the same Person who was his descendant according to the flesh, as being his Lord and superior—the Son of God. Rom. 1: 3–4. The use which our Saviour made of this prophetic language of David to silence His persecutors, shows that the passage was commonly applied by them to the Messiah. OBSERVE.—Jesus, alone, is He who is both David's Lord and Son. ¶ *My right hand.* To sit on the right hand of a king, meant to share in his dominion. See Heb. 1: 3; 10: 12; 1 Peter 3: 22; Rom. 8: 34; Mark 16: 19; Phil. 2: 6–11; Eph. 1: 20–23. This dominion, however, is not that original partnership in the throne which the Son of God has, as the Second Person of the Trinity. It is a station to which He is "*exalted*" as Mediator, in pursuance and reward of His Mediatorial office-work. (Phil. 2: 6–11; Heb. 12: 2.) This right hand seat of dominion He fills as the Incarnate Lord—the God-man—as exalted far above all angelic principality and power—and made Head over all things to the Church. This fact makes the argument of Peter most appropriate. He shows now that this exaltation of Jesus after His Resurrection is that which was predicted and had been fulfilled.

36. *Therefore.* Peter now presses upon his Jewish hearers the fair inference from all that had been seen and heard by them, and testified and proved from the Scriptures—that is, that they were bound to recognize the fulfillment of their own prophecies in *this very Jesus* as the only Person to whom *they*

that God 'hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have <sup>ch. 5: 11.</sup> crucified, both Lord and Christ.

37 ¶ Now when they heard *this*, <sup>g Zach. 12: 10.</sup> they were pricked in <sup>Luke 3: 10.</sup>

could apply. This is the point which Peter lays down as proven, and which he urges them to understand and admit, that *God*, the Father, whom they, the house, or family, or people of Israel, worshiped, had exalted *this same Person* Jesus, whom they had wickedly crucified, to be both Lord—that is, Sovereign and Partner of the throne—and Christ the Messiah. ¶ *All the house of Israel*. All the household, or people from this covenant family of Israel. He appeals to these, for the people (assembly) were “Jews and proselytes,” and the proofs which Peter had brought forward were such as they ought to admit. ¶ *Know assuredly*. Let them *certainly know*, as admitting of no mistake. ¶ *God*. The Father, spoken of in vs. 32, 33, whom the Jews acknowledged and professed to worship—the God of Israel. Thus Peter met them on the ground of their own Scriptures, and showed that by their own religion, it was necessary for them to admit all the claims of Christ, and to admit these events of the Pentecost as the doings of the Risen, Exalted Lord. ¶ *Hath made, &c.* *Hath constituted*—hath appointed or made Jesus to be. The exalted office and station which Jesus held came from the authority and appointment of the God of the Jews—and thus they were bound to recognize Him. ¶ *That same Jesus*. The words here are the same as in vs. 32, “*This (very) Jesus*.” Peter means to press this point, that this very same Person known as Jesus of Nazareth, whom they, the house of Israel, the people of God, had lately crucified, is He whom the Father had exalted to greatest authority and dignity, as the glorious Messiah predicted in their Scriptures. ¶ *Have crucified*. Thus he charges them with the awful impiety of crucifying Jesus, while he shows His exalted character as their long promised King and Messiah. ¶ *Both Lord*. The Jewish people had long expected the Messiah to come as their Sovereign,

filling the throne of David—a great King of kings. Peter points them to the fact that all these predictions were accomplished in this very Person, and that this outpouring of the Spirit is the evidence of His having been exalted to the right hand of power. This fact was calculated to alarm them—for if they had, indeed, treated so cruelly this exalted Personage, who had been raised by the Father to such a throne of power, what should become of them? OBSERVE.—The Lord Jesus occupies a throne. This may well alarm those who trample upon His claims and crucify Him afresh. But it is “*the throne of grace*,” and this may yet encourage the vilest sinners to accept His offered salvation. ¶ *And Christ*. That is, *Messiah*—the glorious, anointed One whom their nation had all along expected, and in whom they had set their highest hopes. If now they had treated Him so cruelly, and had even crucified Him, they had not only slain their own Lord—the hope of Israel—but had made this exalted, glorious Sovereign their enemy and their individual destruction might be expected. OBSERVE.—Peter, in all this discourse set forth the great, simple facts about this well known Person, and brought them home to his hearers as to their part in the matter. And they were led to inquire for salvation and to believe in this same crucified Jesus. What a proof that the Omnipotent Spirit wrought in their hearts to produce such results, making them give up their deep-seated and bitter prejudice and unbelief upon the testimony of this Galilean preacher.

37. *Heard*. It was the hearing of these undeniable facts which moved them, through the power of the Holy Ghost, Rom. 10: 17. ¶ *Were pricked*. The peculiar term here used, and only here, corresponds to our English term *compunction*, and means to prick or pierce with any sharp pointed instrument, the effect of which is sharp and

ch. 9: 6. and 16: 30. their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?

38 Then Peter said unto them, <sup>a</sup> Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

sudden pain. This was the feeling produced upon their hearts. They had a painful sense of their sin and danger. "This," says Calvin, "is the beginning of repentance." "Repentance unto life" commonly begins with a true sense of one's sins. It is plain that they had a deep and painful conviction of their *danger* also, as they cried out for a way of being saved. (1) They saw the dreadful part which they had had, each for himself, in the death of Christ. (2) They saw that this person whom they had crucified was the adorable Messiah. (3) They saw that the last times were at hand. (4) They saw that they had incurred the just displeasure of God Almighty, and had put to death the Prince of Life, their only deliverer. This was calculated to send distress to their hearts. But they saw, also, that the promises were fulfilled, and that the Messiah had come. ¶ *Men and brethren.* *Men, who are brethren*—no longer despised as Galileans, (ch. 1: 7)—no longer charged with being drunk with wine, (vs. 13.) What a sudden and entire change was this in their feelings toward these Disciples. OBSERVE.—True conviction of sin works such a change toward ministers and members of the Church. Those who lately reviled them are not ashamed to entreat them for counsel and instruction. ¶ *What shall we do?* This is the inquiry of men who were filled with anxiety and alarm, not knowing which way to turn, or what must be done. True conviction of sin leads to anxious inquiry for the right course to be pursued in such extremity. It implies (1) a sense of ignorance and dependence. (2) An earnest, anxious desire to know the right way. (3) A willingness to do whatever is necessary in the case. So Saul cried out, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" ch. 9: 6. And

the "jailer at Philippi," ch. 16: 29, 30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (4) It implied, also, a readiness to acknowledge now this Jesus as "*raised up*," "*exalted*," and empowered to dispense the Holy Ghost, vs. 32, 33.

38. *Repent.* The term indicates a *change of mind*, with a view to a change of conduct. There is a repentance like that of Judas, which is a sorrow of the world, and worketh death, (Rom. 7: 10.) These inquirers had already experienced a great change of mind—in regard to their sin, and in regard to their Messiah. "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience." John the Baptist preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus preached the same, meaning that the promised kingdom of the Messiah was ready to be introduced. And now Peter preaches, Repent, for the kingdom had truly come. Jesus had been constituted Lord. He was enthroned as the Risen Lord and Messiah. Therefore, they were also to be *baptized into His name*, publicly expressing thus their faith in the kingdom as having come, and their trust in Jesus for remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, including all the blessings of the great salvation. The Papists have perverted this language, by rendering it "*Do penance*," confining it chiefly to outward ceremonies. This is just the opposite to that change of mind which is denoted by the word, and which is the source of all change in the conduct. OBSERVE.—There is no genuine repentance that does not include an apprehension (a perception and embrace) of the salvation by Christ. It

is thus a turning from sin to God, and from false refuges to Christ, the only refuge. The great Gospel encouragement to repent is found in the news of forgiveness, through the mediation of Christ. This idea is, therefore, included in this direction of Peter. We feel most deeply the heinousness of our sin, when we see the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. ¶ *Every one of you.* They could not rely upon any national covenant any longer. Repentance and faith are individual, personal exercises. ¶ *In the name.* Upon the name. Baptism "into" the name of one signifies the open confession of one's claims, and the public embrace and espousal of one's cause by this badge of discipleship, ch. 8: 16; 19: 5. Baptism is here spoken of as upon the name, that is, upon the basis of it as the foundation of confidence and hope for forgiveness and salvation. "The name" of Christ is His titles, attributes, ordinances, words and works—that by which He makes Himself known. Here the name of *Jesus Christ* is that upon which, as a platform, they were to be baptized. It was a platform of doctrine and of hope. It was not the baptism as a mere form. The name of Jesus Christ was everything in the matter. The emphasis is upon this. Calvin says, "Although baptism be no vain figure, but a true and effectual testimony—notwithstanding, lest any man attribute that unto the element of water which is there offered, the name of Christ is plainly expressed, so that we may know that it shall be a profitable sign for us then, if we seek the force and effect thereof in Christ. Wherefore every one profiteth in baptism, just so far as he learneth to look unto Christ." OBSERVE.—(1) There is no reference here to the precise formula of baptism, but only to the great essential of the ordinance, as implying a public profession of Christ. See Matt. 28: 19. OBSERVE.—(2) Here is the first notice of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. John the Baptist and the Disciples of our Lord had baptized as introductory to the Christian dispensation of the Spirit, Luke 3: 3. But "repentance

and remission of sins were thenceforward to be preached in the name of Jesus Christ," (Luke 24: 47.) Christ had now been "exalted as a Prince (Lord) and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins," (ch. 5: 31.) OBSERVE.—(3) The name "Jesus" means Saviour. "He shall save His people from their sins," (Matt. 1: 21.) The name "*Christ*" means Messiah—Anointed—and together these names comprise the claims which they were to acknowledge. So, also, every inquiring sinner must be directed to make this open and hearty profession of Christ. OBSERVE.—(4) The Jews were here directed to be baptized, as something which they were familiar with. They certainly knew the meaning of the ordinance; and, therefore, no explanation is given. (5) At first, of course adults were addressed. And only after there came to be Christian households were there those who, having been baptized in infancy, would not need adult baptism. Even those who had been circumcised would be required to take this New Testament seal also. We are not informed whether the Apostles were baptized or not—because they so specially had what was signified by baptism—"the gift of the Holy Ghost." ¶ *For the remission.* Literally, *Unto*—to this end. It was not the ordinance of baptism which gave remission of sins, but "the name of Jesus Christ," as turned to and embraced for this end—His finished work, as Jesus, Saviour, and as Messiah, the Incarnate and Risen Lord. There could be no hope of forgiveness proclaimed to the sinner but of free forgiveness in His name—for His merits. It is this good news—the Gospel—to which we are to turn, and which we are gladly to receive. And baptism is that ordinance—one of the two sacraments of Christ's house, whereby this promise of forgiveness and salvation is sealed, confirmed to us, and by receiving which we publicly profess Christ as our only hope of forgiveness. See ch. 3: 19; 22: 16. ¶ *Ye shall receive.* Peter could not have meant that they could repent and embrace Christ

† Joel 2: 28.  
 ch. 3: 25.  
 ‡ ch. 10: 45, and  
 11: 15, 43, and 14:  
 27, & 15: 3, 8, 14.  
 Eph. 2: 13-17.

39 For the promise is unto you and <sup>1</sup>to your children, and <sup>k</sup>to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call.

without having the Holy Spirit, for He alone could work in them a genuine repentance and faith. But He promises them this Divine gift, which they had seen was shed down from heaven, by Christ, according to the ancient prophecy, as the great blessing of the latter days. This may have been understood as more or less including extraordinary miraculous gifts of the Spirit, as of tongues, &c. But not these alone. All the gracious gifts of the Spirit were promised as the fruit of their repentance and embrace of Christ, John 16: 8-10; Gal. 5: 22-24. He would direct them to Christ for all needed grace and blessing, as exalted to give repentance, &c., (ch. 5: 31,) and faith is the gift of God, Eph. 2: 8.

39. *For the promise.* He urges now a strong consideration, drawn from the HOUSEHOLD FEATURE of the covenant. That which the Apostle here speaks of as “the promise,” is the promise of the Spirit as the great blessing of the latter days. It was what Christ had termed “*the promise of the Father*,” for which He directed them to wait, and to receive from Himself as the Risen Lord. He explained it at the time, as *the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which they were to receive not many days thence*. This promise Joel had distinctly expressed in his prophecy. Its form was in keeping with God’s ancient dispensation, including with the believing parent the infant offspring also. This had been the tenor of the covenant promise to Abraham, “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.” And the Jews, who had so much valued this household feature of the Abrahamic covenant, were now assured that the same feature should be extended to the New Dispensation of the same covenant of grace. “*For the promise is unto you and to your children.*” So Paul assured them. “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to THE PROMISE.” So Galat. 3: 14, Paul explains “the blessing of

Abraham” to be “the promise of THE SPIRIT”—to be received through faith. The Apostles call it *the promise*, because it is the same covenant of grace under both economies. The promise of the Spirit was “the promise of the Father”—the great promise of the Old Testament. It was that which was signified by baptism, and the outpouring of which He called a *baptizing* with the Holy Ghost. Hence, as circumcision was a household ordinance, and the covenant with Abraham was a household covenant, so baptism is a household ordinance, taking the place of circumcision as only different seals of the same covenant of grace under different dispensations. “Peter teacheth that all the children of the Jews are contained in the same covenant, because His promise is always in force, “I will be the God of your seed.”—*Calvin*. Yet not that they were therefore saved, of course, nor that their actual salvation was to be presumed from their covenant birth, but that they were thus brought nigh to salvation, and obligated to it. Joel had recognized this feature of the promise, when he said, “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.” So had Isaiah, ch. 44: 3. And these prophets and others were recording “the promise of the Father,” with reference to these latter days. OBSERVE here—In the first Apostolic preaching, where these Jews are first instructed in the principles of the New Dispensation, after Christ’s departure, this household feature with which they had formerly been familiar, was brought forward and insisted on by the Apostle, and here announced as part of the *good news*, and a reason why these parents should repent heartily and embrace Christianity—“For the promise,” &c. Parents may well repent for their *children’s sake*. ¶ And to all, &c. By those “*who are afar off*,” Peter doubtless meant the Gentiles, who are spoken of in these terms, Eph. 2: 11, &c. The call and conversion of the Gentiles

40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

was distinctly predicted by most of the Old Testament prophets, as to take place in these latter days. The Apostles could not have doubted this. They were only, as yet, somewhat in the dark as to how they were to be brought in, rather supposing that they were to come in by first embracing Judaism as proselytes. "*All that are afar off*" were included in the promise. "*I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.*" This could not mean all people without exception, but all without distinction of nation—and so the wall of partition should be broken down, and there should be neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision. So it came to pass, ch. 12: 18. ¶ *Even as many.* As to how many and to whom this gift should be imparted, it must belong to the sovereign pleasure of God to show by the results. He could only say it would be granted to *as many as the Lord our God shall call.* He hath broken down the middle or dividing wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles, and hath come and preached peace unto those which were far off and to those which were nigh, (Eph. 2: 17,) and the covenant promise is not any longer restricted to a certain nation, but it is extended to as many of all nations as He shall effectually CALL. ¶ *The Lord our God.* This is a recognition of His covenant relation to His people. He who, to the Jews, was "the Lord our God," would nevertheless bring in the Gentiles. The Great Shepherd would bring in His sheep of other folds, John 10: 16. ¶ *Shall call.* The term means, *shall call unto*—"bring nigh." ONSERVE.—(1) The repentance, even in these miraculous times, was in view of the *truth* presented. It was in view of personal sin, and of Christ as the true Messiah. (2) It is not mere distress of mind that is true repentance. This cannot save, nor tend to save, except as it may lead to Christ, who alone can save. (3) The invisible Church con-

sists of those only whom God calls out from the world. The visible Church is the body or society having the ordinances. The true invisible Church is included commonly in the visible body.

40. It is here stated that Luke has given us only a sketch, or summary, of Peter's discourse and appeals. He testified (bore witness as to facts,) and exhorted, (with appeals,) saying this and such like things as these. ¶ *Save yourselves.* Rather, *be saved.* This is the true meaning of the term as here found. A reference is made to the fearful times coming—of which he had said that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall *be saved*," vss. 19–21. Now he exhorts "*be saved*," that is, by such earnest calling upon God, and by that repentance and public profession of Christ in baptism, which he just now enjoined, vs. 38. *Be saved*, he says, as if, like the angels at Sodom taking Lot by the hand, he would draw them out of such wicked associations. It is the great privilege and duty of every man to be saved. ¶ *Untoward generation.* The same terms are rendered "crooked nation," in Phil. 2: 15, where they are accompanied by a term meaning *perverse*. The Greek word *yeveá* is commonly rendered "generation," as here. It refers to the Jewish people at that time. They were the bitter enemies and the base murderers of our Lord. He had all along described them as "an evil and adulterous generation," (Matt. 12: 39,) a "generation of vipers," (Matt. 3: 7,) &c. From the great body of the people who rejected, reviled, and slew the Messiah, they were exhorted to seek deliverance, to be separated from them by casting in their lot with the friends of this Nazarene whom they had crucified. And as the Jewish Church was a body *called out* from the world, so the Christian Church was to be a body called out from the Jewish Church and nation.

41 ¶ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized : and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls.

PART II. *Spread of Christianity among the Jews.* Chs. 2-8. A. D. 30-36. "Witnesses in Jerusalem."

§ 5. THE FIRST GROWTH OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH—*Accession of 3000 Members by Christian Baptism—The Christian Life.* Ch. 2 : 41-47.

41. *Then they.* Rather—*They therefore having gladly received the word.* See vs. 37. It was not so much the compunction and distress, as it was the glad reception of the Gospel message, to which it led, that was the vital matter. This, therefore, is here recorded as the happy result of what is stated in vs. 37. The term rendered "*gladly*" denotes the sweet comfort and peace with which these wounded hearts received the Gospel message as proclaimed by Peter. He preached to them Christ, as exalted to give the Holy Ghost; forgiveness of sins in His name, and salvation offered through Him; and they willingly and cheerfully embraced the message as for themselves. Calvin says, "Peter here declares the nature and force of faith that with a prompt and ready mind they embraced his word." "Therefore faith must begin with this readiness and willing desire to obey." This showed their repentance to be *unto life*—that they turned from their sin unto God with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience. OBSERVE.—(1) The Gospel is good news—glad tidings. To whomsoever it is glad tidings and good news, to him it is the Gospel. It has come to make troubled consciences peaceful, and wounded hearts whole, and anxious distressed spirits glad. Sinner! does this doctrine of Christ crucified and risen to give repentance and forgiveness, make you glad? Then it is yours. (2) The great command of the Gospel is, *be saved*. Avail yourselves of this great salvation and rejoice in it. Receive the benefits of Christ's finished work, and have justifi-

fication and peace with God. ¶ *Were baptized.* The Apostle had exhorted them to "Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins"—and now they applied for Christian baptism with this view. It implied the confession of Christ and of forgiveness of sins, as in His name, and it supposed repentance. They made at least a credible profession of this, and from the statements which Luke adds in vs. 42, we infer that these multitudes were genuine converts. By their baptism they publicly professed Christ before men. The doctrines were the great cardinal truths of Christianity which they received in the simplicity of their faith. They matured afterwards in knowledge. OBSERVE — (1) Here is a most important record of the FIRST CHRISTIAN BAPTISM. It was not enough to receive the truth gladly—they must confess Christ openly. (2) It was not so much a profession of themselves, (as having certainly every right exercise,) as it was a profession of Christ as the only name for remission of sins. Some will not venture to profess Christ until they can rather profess themselves. They wait for worthiness to come to the Lord's table, not considering that it is unworthiness which they are to profess, along with Christ's worthiness—their sins, along with His name for remission of sins. ¶ *The same day.* Peter began his preaching at 9 o'clock in the morning. How long he continued is not recorded. But it is plain that the three thousand were *added* to the body of professed believers by baptism, that same day. This baptizing, we think, could not have been by immersion, (1) Because there would not have been time during the remainder of the day after preaching, to note the conversion of so many and go through the tedious process of immersing them all. (2) Because there were no adequate facilities for this in the city. Besides the fountains and cisterns in the houses, which would not allow of it from their

42 'And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

1 vs. 46.  
ch. 1: 14.  
Rom. 12: 12.  
Eph. 6: 18.  
Col. 4: 2.  
Heb. 10: 25.

construction, there were only the rivulet Kidron and the pools of Siloam, Gihon, &c. outside of the city. But to have baptized so many persons in these, had it been otherwise possible, would scarcely have been allowed by the authorities. We must suppose that the form of baptism at that time was by sprinkling or pouring. OBSERVE.—(1) Here was the fruit of the first great outpouring of the Spirit. The means used was the simple presentation of the truth, not any fiery rant. It was a single sermon which the Spirit could bless as well as many. "Whereas," says Calvin, "there was a great multitude converted unto Christ with one sermon, an hundred sermons can scarce move a few of us." (2) We are to pay proper Divine honor to God the Holy Spirit. What mighty results can follow His working. The simplest sermons which present the plain truth as it is in Jesus can be made to result in the salvation of thousands. (3) We are to look for the further and more complete fulfillment of Joel's prophecy in these last days, when the Spirit shall be poured out *upon all flesh*. We are to wait in earnest, continued, believing prayer for the blessing. We are to preach and send abroad the truth, pleading the promise that it shall not return void. (Isa. 55: 11.) (4) Here are the greater works promised the Apostles that they should do through the Spirit. More are converted under this discourse than under all the three years ministry of our Lord.

42. This verse contains a description of the CHRISTIAN LIFE of these early believers. This may be understood as an enumeration of the different branches of Divine worship practiced in the early Church at Jerusalem, in which it is here recorded by Luke that the early believers *continued steadfast*. See the terms as used in ch. 6: 4—of the Apostles. These are, indeed, the four essential elements of all true Christian

association and devotion. They received the teachings of the Apostles in a system of instruction and edification, and maintained, faithfully, the distinctive doctrines which they preached. They observed, also, what is here termed the *fellowship*—*κοινωνία*—which means, not so much *communion* as *communication*—a liberal distribution of their worldly goods, as is noticed more fully in vs. 44, 45; see Rom. 15: 26; 2 Cor. 8: 4; 9: 13; Heb. 13: 16. If this passage be taken, as some suppose, for a sketch of the mode in which their religious assemblies were conducted, we may suppose it to mean that (1) the Apostles preached, and (2) the Disciples, who were present, came forward with gifts and offerings for the poor, as an act of worship. This was done previously to the administration of the Lord's Supper, at their social meal. This would explain the great and awful heinousness of crime in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. It was an act of public hypocrisy in the worship of God. And for this they were made a spectacle, the better to enforce the principles of God's worship. (3) The third service was that of "*breaking of bread*," which refers to the Lord's Supper; not alone, however, but in connection with the *ἀγάπαι*, or love-feasts, which always accompanied this ordinance in the early Church. The phrase here is taken from the custom of the master of the feast breaking bread in asking a blessing, ch. 27: 35. (4) The fourth item of Divine service here mentioned is *prayers*. No set times or forms of Christian worship existed as yet. The Christian Sabbath was indeed observed by public devotion—not, as yet, in edifices erected for the purpose, but from house to house. The hours of prayer, also, were observed in the temple, (3: 11.) OBSERVE.—The Lord's Supper is the ordinance of the New Testament Church, instead of the Passover—an 'Baptism, instead of Circumcision.



<sup>m</sup> Mark 16:17.  
ch. 4:33 and  
b: 12.

<sup>n</sup> ch. 4:32, 34.

<sup>o</sup> isa. 58:7.

<sup>π</sup> ch. 1:14.  
<sup>q</sup> Luke 24:53.

43 And fear came upon every soul: and <sup>m</sup> many wonders and signs were done by the apostles.

44 And all that believed were together, and <sup>n</sup> had all things common:

45 And sold their possessions and goods, and <sup>o</sup> parted them to all *men*, as every man had need.

46 <sup>π</sup> And they, continuing daily with one accord <sup>q</sup> in the

43. The effect of their religious living upon the outside world is here described. ¶ *And fear.* This was a religious awe which came upon "*every soul*"—that is, of the multitude who were not of the Church. The very persons who had a little while before derided the Christian assembly, (vs. 13,) were now struck with reverential fear at the evident tokens of the Divine Presence with the Disciples. The effect of the holy character of these Christian men, and of their elevated devotion and communion with God, would be to fill the multitude with awe. Besides, the events in connection with the prophetic forewarnings, pointed to most solemn crises at hand, of which they had good reason to be afraid. ¶ *Many wonders.* This is a general statement, covering what follows in the succeeding history. It is here mentioned, perhaps, as accounting in part for the awe and dread which fell upon the beholders.

44. *All that believed.* It is probable that by this time the Christian Discipleship numbered four to five thousand. Before Pentecost there were more than five hundred Disciples. On that day, three thousand were added to this body. Daily additions are mentioned, vs. 47. At the miracle at the Beautiful Gate, they who believed amounted to about five thousand in all, ch. 4: 4. In ch. 5:12, we find them meeting for worship in Solomon's Porch, probably because they had become too numerous to assemble in any private place. By this time they were recognized as a distinct society or community. See Notes, ch. 5:12. ¶ *Together.* This refers to their practice of public religious assembling. It must be remembered, however, that this assembling here mentioned includes only

such as remained in Jerusalem after the feast, and that the great multitude had dispersed to their foreign homes.

¶ *All things common.* See vs. 42, Notes.

45. *Possessions and goods*—are here mentioned to express various kinds of property—as we say "*goods and chattels.*" ¶ *Parted them.* Distributed the proceeds—"their price." ¶ *As every, one had need.* Rather, *As every one might have need.* The particle which expresses *contingency* is here used. It was not an actual distribution of all their goods, but a treasuring up for whatever need there might be to any, and a supplying of necessities from this common fund. Gieseler remarks that it is not a community of goods, but a spontaneous arrangement of property, according to the precept in Luke 12:33, "Sell that ye have and give alms," &c.

46. *Continuing.* This term is sometimes translated, *To continue steadfastly*, (ch. 2:42)—"*Continue instant,*" (Rom. 12:12)—"*Attend continually,*" (Rom. 13:6.) It carries the idea of special persistence and adherence to the work or practice. *They continuing earnestly every day.* It was in the business of daily prayers in the temple that the body of believers continued earnestly. We find Peter and John going up (ch. 3:1,) thither at one of the stated hours. We read of three appointed hours, (Ps. 55:18; Dan. 6:11.) More commonly, perhaps, there were but *two*: at 9 o'clock (third hour) in the morning, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, called the ninth hour. ¶ *With one accord.* This term is several times used in this narrative, and seems to refer to public assemblies—expressing their harmonious, united meeting. ¶ *Breaking bread.* This would seem to be the same as is mentioned in vs. 42, where

temple, and breaking bread || from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart.

47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

ch. 5: 42.  
r ch. 20: 7.  
|| Or, at home.

\* Luke 2: 52.  
ch. 4: 33.  
Rom. 14: 18.  
r ch. 5: 14, and  
11: 24.

it plainly referred to the special service of the Lord's Supper, and the accompanying *feasts of love*. ¶ *From house, &c.* Rather, *at home*, as distinct from "*in the temple*." A church in the house is mentioned, Rom. 16: 5; Colos. 4: 15; 1 Cor. 16: 19. This does not mean "from house to house," but *in the house*—at home—privately—they celebrated the Lord's death daily in the appointed social meal—the Lord's Supper. The celebration of the Lord's death was instituted as a social meal, so as to sanctify and sweeten our commonest living, and to make our daily meals sacred, that we might eat and drink to His glory. Hence it is added in immediate connection with this, that they *did eat their meat*—partook their food. This describes the effect of their religion upon their domestic and social life. They even partook their ordinary meals with *gladness*. Religion, when in lively exercise, makes life most truly happy—even gives relish to humble fare beyond what the banquets of princes afford. So we are taught by our Lord to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," and to partake it, of course, in glad and grateful recognition of His bounty. The Lord's Supper makes every meal come to us with gladness. ¶ *Singleness*. Child-like simplicity and sincerity of heart accompanied their gladness. There were no complainings, nor cravings after luxuries and dainties. A single eye, and heart easily satisfied—with gladness and peace—characterized this primitive body of believers.

47. *Praising God*. This they did, as well as ate their meals. They not only gave praise to Him for common mercies, but they were especially and habitually occupied in acts and services of social praise. The early Christians are described by Pliny in the opening of the 2d century, as singing hymns to

Christ with each other—and Paul exhorts the Ephesians and Colossians to sing to each other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto God. ¶ *Having favour*. So it resulted by God's power and grace that those who were so lately mocked were joined by the men who mocked them, and were treated with favor by the people generally. ¶ *The Lord added*. This great work is here recorded as the doing of the Risen Lord actively operating in His Church. Peter planted and others watered, but God gave the increase. He *added*—or *kept adding*, day by day. ¶ *To the Church*.—ἐκκλησία. This term means the body of people *called out*—separated from the world—namely, as Christians. In its common classic sense it denotes any *assembly*, and so also in Acts 19: 39–41. The visible Church consists of the professedly called. The *Church* invisible and real, consists of the inwardly called—or *called out* from the world. The term is here first used of the Christian community as actually existing. As *the Lord* is said to have added these, the *invisible* Church is implied, which is included, however, in the *visible* Church. The term frequently occurs in the Greek version of the Old Testament to denote the whole congregation of Israel. It was not merely a collective name for many dispersed individuals having a common character or faith or practice, but a defined body, a distinct society called out from the world at large, and called together for a special purpose, and possessing within itself an organization for the attainment of that purpose. Such was the Church of the Old Testament. And the New Testament Church was not a totally different one, but the same reorganized under a new Dispensation. See ch. 5: 11; 8: 1–3; 9: 31; 11: 22, 12: 1–5. ¶ *Should be saved*. Rather,

## CHAPTER III.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 2: 46.

<sup>b</sup> Ps. 118: 17.

1 Now Peter and John went up together <sup>a</sup>into the temple at the hour of prayer, <sup>b</sup>being the ninth hour.

*the saved—those who were saved.* Those who obeyed the exhortation “*be saved*,” vs. 40, and embraced the Gospel of Christ as the power of God unto salvation, vs. 21. The term is used (1 Cor. 1: 18; 2 Cor. 2: 15,) of those “*who are saved*,” according to the Divine purpose. Here it refers back also to the *promise of being saved*, made to those who should call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, vs. 21. **OBSERVE.**—The New Testament Church was the true succession of the Old. It was composed at first of Old Testament members; the same Church as before, only enlarged and reformed, according to Old Testament predictions, ch. 3: 25; 2: 39; Eph. 2: 17; Isa. 59: 20; 65: 1; 66: 2. The converts, therefore, are said to *have been added* to the Church already existing. (2) The Church accordingly recognized by Divine authority the same household feature as in the Old Covenant, ch. 2: 39; 3: 25, 26. The promise had come to them according to the Abrahamic covenant made with their fathers. They were addressed as children of the covenant, and so likewise the promise is distinctly declared to be to them and to their children, and to those afar off, (Gentiles,) on the same household principle. They are exhorted to repent on this account, and be baptized, as thus able to claim the covenant blessings, through faith in Him in whose Name they were baptized. (3) The *visible Church* is contemplated to which the thousands “*were added*” by baptism, (ch. 2: 41.) (4) As yet the first Christians continue in the old place of worship, the temple, and use the old forms of worship, ch. 2: 46; 3: 1; 5: 12, recognizing in all these events only what was to be looked for from prophecy, and only a different dispensation of the same Church and covenant. They, however, band together as a distinct community from the mass of Jews, and worship also in private houses, upper chambers, &c. They

are marked by their profession of the name of Jesus Christ, and into this name they are baptized. (5) The Jewish Passover had found its fulfillment in the crucifixion of Christ, as the Paschal Lamb. The Pentecost was fulfilled in the great outpouring and ingathering at that festival. It only now remains that the feast of Tabernacles be fulfilled in that great consummation, when all flesh shall celebrate the glorious event typified by that festival in which thanks were offered for the ingathering of all the fruits of the land—the *closing* feast of the year. Zech. 14: 16. Thus we have seen the Christian Church grafted on the ancient Jewish stock, and enlarged by means of Apostolic preaching, attested by miraculous power, and blessed by the Holy Spirit. Now the Church is to be still further enlarged by means of the preached word, carried home by the same Spirit, amidst violent opposition, “*God also bearing them witness both with signs*,” &c. (Heb. 2: 4.) **OBSERVE.**—The First recorded Miracle of the Apostles now leads to the First Hostility, which the Risen Lord turns to the conversion of many.

## CHAPTER III.

§ 6. THE FIRST MIRACLE.—*Lame Man.*—(*Peter and John.*)—*Peter's Discourse.*—A. D. 30–36. Ch. 3.

Already in the wonderful scenes at Pentecost, the Apostles had been enabled to do “*the greater works*,” according to the promise of our Lord, (John 14: 12.) Now, as had also been promised, (Mark 16: 17, 18,) they began to work miracles, one of which is here recorded. (See ch. 2: 43.) Such miraculous gifts were at once a fruit of the Spirit's descent upon them, and a proof of their Divine commission. ¶ *Peter and John.* These two Apostles, so different in age and character, were closely united in personal friendship.

2 And <sup>a</sup> a certain man lame from his mother's womb <sup>ch. 14: 8</sup> was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple

(See Introduction to Notes on John.)  
 ¶ *Went up.* Rather, *were going up.*  
 ¶ *Together.* Alford, in his edition, connects the words here rendered "together," with the previous chapter. But there seems no good ground for this. There is emphasis in the idea that these two Apostles, who were together preparing the last Passover, (Luke 22: 8,) running to the Sepulchre, —John believing, Peter perhaps doubting, (John 20,)—and afterwards together fishing, (John 21,) as if having, partly at least, returned to their trade in that interval—were now found together again, not merely as of the twelve, but as a loving pair of brethren, each more attracted to the other than to the brother which each of them had in the Apostolate—Peter even more drawn to John than to Andrew, and John more drawn to Peter than to James. ¶ *Into the temple.* Rather, *unto.* It is plain that the Apostles and brethren at Jerusalem had not abandoned the Jewish worship, ch. 2: 46; Luke 24: 53. This was not denounced as sinful or evil, but it was to be gradually supplanted by the Christian worship. When it came to be contended for as to be adhered to, in preference to Christianity, it was then pronounced against. Yet the Jewish ordinances were observed by them in a new and Christian spirit, as *setting forth Christ as having come.* Besides these, however, they had their distinct Christian services. ¶ *At the hour of prayer.* Literally, *at the (that) hour of prayer, which was the ninth.* There were three hours of prayer, (the third, sixth and ninth hours,) and this was the one which was last. As the natural day was divided among the Jews into twelve hours of irregular length, from sunrise to sunset, the ninth hour was about three o'clock in the afternoon, which was the time of the evening sacrifice. The third hour, or nine o'clock in the morning, was the time of the morning sacrifice. The early Christians seem to have had stated times in the day, but

they are not mentioned. At the close of the second century these hours were in use, and were very probably the stated times from the beginning.

2. *Lame, &c.* As he was *born* a cripple, there was no room for deception. He was well known as lame from his birth, and any cure of such a case could not be disputed. ¶ *Was carried.* *Was being carried.* This cripple was just in the way of being carried thither, as they were going up. ¶ *Whom they laid daily.* *Whom they used to place daily, &c.* The habit of this man's friends was to carry him daily thither in the morning, and carry him back at evening. It was the common custom among the Jews and Gentiles to station their beggars at the temple gates, or at the gates of the rich, (as Lazarus, Luke 16: 20,) inasmuch as they had no public hospitals or almshouses before the introduction of Christianity. [The pool of Bethesda was indeed a house of mercy which had been reared around a mysterious water. But that was a Divine dispensary, typical of Christ's salvation. An angel miraculously stirred the water, and thus it became available to the cure of *one only* at a time, and he (as in the Gospel pool,) the one first stepping in, making it the *first* business and pressing in as for his life—taking it violently and as if by force.] The custom prevails more or less in all countries, but especially in Papal Europe, to station beggars at the doors of hotels, at the entrance of bridges, and wherever they will be likely to be in the path of most passers by, of whom they can ask alms. In some cities of Italy the police regularly assign the beggars their station early in the morning for the day, at hotel doors, bridges and gates. See Mark 10: 46; Luke 18: 35; John 9: 1-8. At the gates of the temple many would be passing in and out, and it could fairly be presumed that their devotions would dispose them to give liberally to the afflicted poor. Begging, however, was often made a trade, and

*John 9:8.* which is called Beautiful, <sup>a</sup>to ask alms of them that entered into the temple;

3 Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.

4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us.

5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them.

became a source of imposition upon the kind-hearted. But alas! for this cripple. He had been in this case over forty years. ¶ *Beautiful.* There were nine gates, as Josephus mentions, covered with silver and gold. This gate is thought most likely to have been that splendid one covered with bas-relief lily work of Corinthian brass which Josephus describes, B. J. 5: 3. It was erected by Herod the Great, and called Nicanor. It was on the east side of the temple toward Kedron, and formed the eastern entrance. The gate *Susan* or *Shushan*, was near to Solomon's porch, whither the people ran, (vs. 11.) It separated the court of the Gentiles from the inner court, and was in a line with the gate of Nicanor and the inner entrance of the temple. And it was near the sheep-market, where the crowd would likely have been greatest. Hence some incline to understand this as the gate referred to, though there seems no trace of such a name as this of "Beautiful," belonging to it. The blind man, John 9: 1, was probably at the temple gate. ¶ *To ask alms. Charity—benefaction.* Their object in taking their station there was to solicit some charity from those who were about to enter into the temple. The poor will naturally expect that worshipers of God will be charitable to the destitute.

3. *Seeing Peter and John.* They asked of these probably just as of others, and without any knowledge of them as Apostles. They asked of them because they saw them *about to enter the Temple.* The forms in use among the Jews in asking alms were such as these—"Be generous to me"—"Help yourself by helping me." ¶ *Asked—lit., asked to receive.* OBSERVE.—The poor cripple, never thinking that his

lameness could be removed, asked only for a pittance to help him in his disability. God can, and will, give him more than he asks or thinks.

4. *Fastening his eyes—Looking intently.* This term is used by Luke twelve times, and by no other New Testament writer, except by Paul twice. He looked on the man thus, in order to excite his attention and to raise his expectation. ¶ *Look on us.* It would show that these Apostles claimed to have some special power, and that the cure which they would work was of their deliberate purpose—not by accident nor by artifice—in which latter case they would rather have said, "*Look away from us.*" Calvin also suggests that the Apostle wished, before proceeding, to be certain of the purpose and intent of God, and hence that this preparatory look was by the motion of the Holy Spirit. OBSERVE.—How much more anxious are men by nature for the healing of their bodies than of their souls; and how much more ready to ask an alms of their fellow men, than to ask the proffered salvation of God.

5. *Gave heed—Fixed his attention.* The natural effect of that address upon the man is here recorded. Most of those whom the poor cripple solicited had probably paid no attention, or had carelessly cast down a mite at their feet and hurried on. And now to see these two men stop at his cry, and by their manner, and tone, and words, "*Look on us,*" to get a hint of some special interest in his case, was altogether rare and exciting. Was he not already looking on them, to see if some charity might not be bestowed? This call, then, to *look*, meant something. So the Saviour calls to

6 Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: <sup>e</sup> In the name of Jesus Christ <sup>e</sup> ch. 4 10. of Nazareth rise up and walk.

sinners in their disability, "*Look unto me and be saved.*" Oh that every poor cripple from the fall would give heed, and expect to receive what Jesus has to give!

6. This man was not of the Discipleship, and hence he was not a regular sharer in the free distribution which they made of their goods, ch. 2: 45. Yet it is plain that they gave liberally to others who were not of the Discipleship. Peter, at this time, had no money to give, or not so much as would avail to relieve the man's necessities. And especially, as he purposed to do him a greater service, he turns away the beggar's attention from silver and gold. Perhaps he meant: "*I am no rich man—money is not what I have to give.*" What a disappointment for the moment, when the man hears that he is not to get any money, as he had hoped! What then? Is it good wishes—charitable words? "Be thou warmed—be thou filled"—cheap, and often empty? ¶ *But such.* The Apostle left the man in no long and painful suspense. Money is not even to this poor beggar the only good. Many gifts would have been better to him than silver and gold. To be taken home and insured a comfortable living for life, would have been better than a liberal alms on the spot. It was quite clear that the speaker meant to do him some service, and now he says he will give him *such as he has*. Well was it for the poor cripple that Peter had no money, and that this gift of healing—the greatest gift—was such as he had to give. So Jesus gives us not silver and gold in the Gospel. But let us not despond, since what he has to give, is "durable riches and righteousness"—"the unspeakable gift." OBSERVE.—The Pope uses these words profanely and falsely—denying that he has money, when he has it, as the Apostles had not—and professing to have spiritual gifts to bestow in his benediction, when he has them not at all. He

cannot say, "*Arise and walk.*" as Peter here said it, with healing to the cripple. He will not say, "*Arise and walk.*" as he might say it, in an inferior sense, to his crippled and impotent people, if he would. OBSERVE.—Peter does not here claim that this healing is by his own power, but this is what he has to bestow, *in the name* (as he avows) of *Jesus Christ*. This gift of working miracles in Christ's name was promised to them. Mark 16, 17, 18. ¶ *In the name.* He does not say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you," but the name of Jesus is that *in which*—by the power of which—the "rise up and walk" is to be accomplished. He says that this is the work and benefit of Christ—that Christ was the author of the miracle; that it was not by their "*power or holiness,*" vs. 12, but "His name, through faith (of the Apostles) in His name," and "the faith which is (wrought) by Him," or which He has introduced as the only way of salvation, could alone give him a cure. OBSERVE.—Jesus Christ wrought miracles in His own name. The Apostles wrought them only in His name, and not in their own—and this they did only by faith in His name. ¶ *Jesus Christ of Nazareth.* This was the name of contempt and reproach which His enemies had fastened upon Him, and which went with Him to His Cross. The Apostles mean now to say that it was in virtue of this hated, despised name, and for the glorifying of it before men, that this mighty work was to be done. The beggar had probably heard of this Jesus of Nazareth; and even if not, Peter proclaimed that this miracle is Christ's, and not theirs; and thus He preaches the Crucified One as the Risen Lord, as alive and active in his Church and in the world. ¶ *Rise up and walk.* The cripple here had some faith in this "*Wonderful*" name. Else why should he not have taken it all in jest or derision, and replied that it could only be a tantalizing of his helpless condi-

7 And he took him by the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.

And he 'leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

f Isa. 35: 6.

tion, to tell him to do what he was so powerless to accomplish. "Here appears both the force of the word, and the fruit of faith. The cripple is so touched by the word, that he obeys without delay; and it gives strength to his dead members, and after a sort renews the man. And faith also hath her reward, in that the cripple obeyeth him who commandeth him to rise, and not in vain."—*Calvin*. OBSERVE.—The command carried with it the enabling power. All that was required, was confidence, and an effort on the basis of the command. The commands of the New Testament come to us with a provision of grace and strength sufficient to "whosoever will." The Gospel message to the disabled sinner is, Rise up and walk. But it comes from One who at the same time furnishes the requisite ability. Therefore, it is no demand upon us for impossibilities. It is rather a message of mercy, since it bids us to do it all in His freely offered strength. So the command to the man of the withered hand, Stretch out thy hand, was not the language of stern severity. It was rather a command which provided, also, power to the paralyzed limb, and hence it was a message of great joy to the poor sufferer; and rightly apprehending it, he acted on the basis of the command—took it for encouragement, and not for discouragement, and was healed in the very act. It was the word laid hold on with cheerful confidence, that brought the healing. The name of Jesus, the Messiah, however despised as the Nazarene, is the only name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.

7. *Took him, &c.* This was a clear evidence of the fact that help was furnished *with the command*. It could not have been merely in Peter's thus giving him the aid of his hand. This only indicated the **greater** aid that was

furnished by Divine power. Thus, indeed, God not only grants us the essential and omnipotent strength within, but gives us also the aid of outward means of grace. ¶ *Immediately*. In any other cure, the most that could have been done would have been a very gradual restoration to the use of his limbs. Here the cure was immediate, and by a word. ¶ *Feet and ankle bones*. Properly, his *soles and ankles*. Luke commonly gives these minute descriptions in such cases, as was natural for him to do, being a physician; and thus an undesigned coincidence proves that the book was written by him. ¶ *Received strength*—Rather, *Were made firm*.

8. *Leaping up*. This was a natural expression of his joy, while it was a clear proof of his recovery. The miracle was not merely in giving strength to his limbs. The art of using the limbs freely is acquired by long practice. Persons who have been confined many years by sickness, or in prison, cannot readily walk, even when their strength is restored. ¶ *Stood and walked*. These were the different ways in which the man expressed his first delight, as if scarcely knowing how to contain himself, or what to do. Leaping, standing, walking—how must he have joyed in exercising his recovered limbs, glad to prove to himself and others the blessed reality of the change. So is it with the truly regenerate. Christian exercises are a pleasure, not a task. It is a delight to move in any way that sets in active operation these new-born powers. The activities of Christian devotedness are only the free expression of Christian gratitude and joy. Thus it comes to pass in the days of the Messiah as Isaiah foresaw, "*then shall the lame man leap as an hart*," Isa. 35: 6. ¶ *Entered*. The healed cripple used his restored limbs for entering the place

9 "And all the people saw him walking and praising <sup>9 ch. 4:16, 22</sup> God:

10 And they knew that it was he which <sup>10</sup>sat for alms at <sup>10 Like John 9: 4</sup> the Beautiful gate of the temple: and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John,

of public worship—following the example set him by the good men who had thus befriended him, and also following his heart's fresh impulse to give public thanks to God. The regenerate man will seek at once to put forth all his energies in the service and praise of God. He will naturally and at once seek to worship in communion with God's people, entering with them into the temple. He that loves Christ and feels his indebtedness to Him alone for salvation, will seek to profess Him, and would do it even if He had not so commanded. ¶ *Praising God.* True Christian activity must spring from lively Christian gratitude. It is a deep sense of the immense benefits received from Christ that makes us feel that we cannot do enough for Him, nor sufficiently speak forth his praise. He praised God, "walking and leaping," in the use of his newly restored faculties. So we should put forth all our regenerate faculties in His service, and delight to use all our resources for His glory. OBSERVE.—He praised not the Apostles, but God. This shows his intelligent faith "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," that was professed as the source of the miracle. Every truly new-born man will give all the glory of his salvation to God. "To conceal God's mercies is ingratitude. To attribute them to others is sacrilege."

9. *All the people.* This miracle was to affect not only the single individual restored. It was to have great effects upon beholders. So it is in the case of any true conversion. But, more especially, in well-known and conspicuous cases. This is the mighty responsibility which some men have, whose conversion to God might move thousands to reflection and inquiry, and, through the Divine blessing, to

salvation. ¶ *Saw him.* This is here recorded to show that the miracle was not done in a corner. The multitude saw the miraculous cure.

10. The people of Jerusalem, who frequented the temple, had often seen this cripple stationed at the gate. They *knew* him well. And now they recognized this happy man as the very same. Thus they were able to bear witness of the facts, and the wondrous deed had ample confirmation. There could, therefore, have been no imposture. Like all the miracles of Christ and the Apostles, the facts were most evident and the proofs were most abundant. The facts were—That the man, now forty years old, (ch. 4: 22,) had been a cripple from his birth, (vs. 2.) The proof of his having been really helpless was found in the pains which friends had so long taken with him to bring him there and to carry him back daily, (vs. 2,) and in the wonder and amazement which all the people expressed at his being suddenly able to walk. There were, no doubt, most abundant proofs of his being no impostor. The Apostles may have seen him before at the same place, though there is no positive evidence of his having known who they were. *All the people* who were now so convinced of the miracle, were not mainly the friends and followers of Christ, but His enemies; such as had recently joined in the scenes of the Crucifixion. The man, who would himself be likely to know whether a cure had been wrought or not, gives his own glad testimony, and the multitude see and know that it is even so. What room could there have been for deception?

11. *Held. Held fast*—grasping, so as not to be separated from them. Some understand it of adhering to



<sup>¶ John 10: 23.</sup> all the people ran together unto them in the porch <sup>1</sup> that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.  
<sup>ch. 5: 12.</sup>

¶ 12 And when Peter saw *it*, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?

them in his principles. But as in ch. 2: 49, the word is to be taken in the sense of physical cleaving to them in the crowd, which was most natural. The other idea would be expressed in another word. He thus testified to all that these men were his benefactors. ¶ *The porch.* The outer wall of the temple court was lined with piazzas, verandahs, or porches, and on the eastern side was this one, originally built by Solomon, and not entirely destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, but restored by Zerubbabel, and renewed with great magnificence by Herod, and still retaining its name. It was a double row of marble columns 25 cubits high, with a richly carved roof of cedar wood, and 30 cubits wide. This porch was on the east side toward the valley of Jehoshaphat, and near to "the Beautiful gate." This was a place where the Apostles commonly met, ch. 3: 11; 5: 12, and Christ walked, John 10: 23. ¶ *Greatly wondering.* That is, the people ran together, *greatly wondering*—very much *astonished* at what they saw had taken place. The people were united in this natural amazement.

12. *He answered.* Their manner was such as to show that some statement was called for to satisfy their inquiry, and very possibly, as they congregated, they asked, also, for an explanation of this event. Yet this term is often found as here, where no formal question has been asked. The analysis of this Second Discourse of Peter which now follows, is thus: he says, (1) This is not our work but God's, and in order to glorify His Son Christ Jesus, (vss. 12, 13.) (2) Him (Jesus Christ,) ye denied and killed; but God has raised Him up, (verses 13–15.) (3) Through His name this man is made whole, (vs. 16.) (4) Ye did it in ignorance, but God thereby carried out His gracious purpose, (vss. 17, 18.) (5)

Repent, in order that ye may be forgiven and saved by this Jesus Christ at His coming, (vss. 19–21.) (6) His times have been the theme of prophecy from the beginning, (vs. 21,) as for example in citations given, (vss. 22–24.) (7) Application of this to the hearers as Jews, (vss. 25, 26.) ¶ *At this.* At this *man*, or at this *thing*. It would seem that they had cause for wondering, as *Bengel* remarks. But they ought to acknowledge God from whom the healing benefit came, and not to have their wonder terminate upon the thing itself or upon the instruments. As Jews they ought to have recognized the Divine power in such a wonderful work, as they were familiar with miracles in their whole history. ¶ *On us.* This was their fault, that they were ready to think of such a work as proceeding from mere men. *Calvin* says, "This is the first part of the sermon wherein he reproveth superstition." ¶ *Power.* This in men could be only some magical craft, or else some preternatural power for working miracles. ¶ *Holiness.* "Meritorious efficacy with God so as to have obtained this from Him on our own account." The Apostles directly contradict any such doctrine as that God bestows any benefits upon us by virtue of the merits of the saints. OBSERVE.—They might here have taken advantage of the popular impression if they had pleased to exalt themselves. But they would have all the glory given to God. This is an example for the ministry in all time. It was a Jewish notion that if a man arrived at a high degree of holiness he would be able to work miracles. This is the origin of the Romish doctrine of supererogation, that a man by extra piety can lay up a store of merit beyond what he will need for himself and which may be made available for others.

13 \*The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, <sup>1</sup>hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye <sup>m</sup>delivered up, and <sup>a</sup>denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let *him* go.

14 But ye denied <sup>o</sup>the Holy One <sup>p</sup>and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;

<sup>k</sup> ch. 5: 30.  
<sup>l</sup> John 1: 39, and  
 12: 16, and 17: 1.  
<sup>m</sup> Matt. 27: 2.  
<sup>n</sup> Matt. 27: 20.  
<sup>o</sup> Mark 15: 11.  
<sup>p</sup> Luke 23: 18, 20-21  
 John 18: 40, 19: 15  
 ch. 13: 28.  
<sup>q</sup> Ps. 16: 10.  
 Mark 1: 24.  
 Luke 1: 35.  
 ch. 2: 27, & 4: 27.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. 7: 52, & 22: 14.

13. *The God of Abraham, &c.* The God of the Jews whom he addressed—of the Patriarchs, their fathers—in whom they boasted, as a nation. This was to show them that he did not seek to introduce the worship of any new God, but only a new form of worship of the same; and that the Jehovah whom their fathers had professed, had shown Himself to be the Author of this religion. That hence, as children of Abraham, they were directly interested in it, as it was, indeed, the fulfillment of the great covenant promise to Abraham, that in him all the families of the earth should be blessed. Gen. 12: 3. See Gal. 3: 16. ¶ *Hath glorified.* Peter ascribes the miracle to Jehovah, their fathers' God; and declares that in this way He had put distinguished honor upon His Son, whom they had crucified. The object of John's Gospel narrative is to show how Christ was glorified by His miracles, and by various testimonies, as well as by the Father's direct act in His Resurrection, John 13: 32; His Ascension, John 12: 16; and miracles, John 6: 14. The Apostle aimed also to show here, that the Crucified One was living, and that this was the evidence of His being glorified, and of His active presence and power in the world. ¶ *His Son Jesus, (παῖς.)* The term here for "Son," refers to the office of Christ as the "Servant of Jehovah," spoken of by Isaiah, (chs. 40-56,) and familiar to the Jews. The more common term for Son of God—denotes His Divine nature. ¶ *Ye delivered up.* "Ye" is here emphatic—*Ye yourselves*—and is in contrast with "the God of Abraham" on the one hand, and Pilate on the other. Though ye delivered Jesus unto Pilate, and thus incurred the greater sin, as He said, (John 19: 11,) "the God of your

fathers hath glorified him" by this very miracle; and even Pilate, in contrast with you, had given his decision to release Him. ¶ *Denied Him*—(1) *Rejected Him*, as your promised Messiah—(2) *in the presence of Pilate*, a heathen governor, who sought to release Him—at the tribunal, where he was arraigned at your instance. ¶ *Determined.* This they did, when Pilate had actually given his judgment in favor of releasing Him. Matt. 27: 17-25; Luke 23: 16-23. Pilate seems to have made at least five distinct attempts to procure the release of Jesus, in a way that would conciliate the Jews. At length, these very men, it may be, warned him that if he should let Him go, he would prove himself an enemy of Cæsar. This was too much for Pilate. This shows how aggravated was their guilt, that they urged on His cruel death, against the decision of the heathen governor. Luke 23: 14-16, 20; John 19: 4-12. And how dare they also be found fighting against God?

14. Peter now shows how enormous was their sin—that they rejected such an one as Christ, and chose in preference such an one as Barabbas. The contrast of these representative characters is strongly given. Jesus was "*the Holy One and the Just.*" The former title was found in Ps. 16: 10, and cited ch. 2: 27—"thy Holy One." He was also *the Just One*. He was so, by Pilate's own verdict, as well as in His own essence. "I find no fault at all in Him"—no legal ground of accusation. So Stephen (ch. 7: 52,) called Him "*the Just One;*" and Ananias (ch. 22: 14,) called Him "*that Just One.*" It would seem to have been a title of the Messiah which the audience would recognize. In contrast with this, was the character of Barabbas "*a murderer,*"

¶ Or, *author*.  
 Heb. 2: 10, and  
 5: 9.  
 1 John 5: 14  
 9 ch. 2: 24.  
 7 ch. 2: 32.  
 8 Matt. 9: 22.  
 ch. 4: 10, and  
 14: 9.

15 And killed the ¶ Prince of life, <sup>a</sup>whom God hath raised from the dead; <sup>r</sup>whereof we are witnesses.

16 <sup>a</sup>And his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.

ch. 1: 16; 2: 14; Matt. 27: 21. Jesus was THE *Sinless One*. Barabbas was the ringleader of sinners—a robber, a leader of sedition, and a murderer. ¶ *A murderer*. Literally, *a man, a murderer*—a Hebrew idiom. This is put in special contrast with “the *Prince of Life*,” vs. 15. ¶ *To be granted*. “To be given as a gratuity for your gratification”—or rather to be given to you as your choice, and as if to your embrace. This was your affinity, ch. 25: 11, 16; 27; 24. “If Pilate had brought forth Barabbas to you, you ought to have desired Jesus to be released instead.”—*Bengel*.

15. *The Prince of life*. The double contrast is here brought out. Ye killed Him who was the Prince of Life, and chose a murderer—one who takes away life—in preference to Christ, the Giver of life, John 5: 21, 25, 26. Isaiah prophesied of Christ, “Behold I have given Him for a Leader and Commander to the people,” Isa. 55: 4. And this term rendered “*Prince*” means *Leader*. In ch. 5: 31, Christ is called “a Prince and a Saviour,” and in Heb. 2: 10, the “Prince or Captain of Salvation.” In Heb. 12: 2, it is “Author (and Finisher) of faith.” Christ is the Prince of Life, called in 1 John 1: 1, “the *Word of Life*,” which was from the beginning—“in whom was life,” John 1: 4; 5: 11, 12—because He has introduced the spiritual and eternal life into the world, and guides His followers to it; and because He has conquered death in His Resurrection. See 1 Cor. 15: 20–40. ¶ *Whom God hath raised—awakened—from dead, (ones.)* Though they had put Christ to death, this did not destroy Him. He was proved to be the Prince of Life by His glorious rising from the company of the dead. And thus they were shown to be fighting against Jehovah. Here Peter per-

forms the Apostolic work of preaching Christ’s Resurrection. And this event put the seal of God—the God of Abraham—their fathers’ God, upon Christ’s work. ¶ *Whereof*. This was their business as Apostles, to be witnesses of this fact, (ch. 1: 22.)

16. Peter, in accounting for this miracle, has now come to the important point, that it was through the working of His Divine power whom they had wickedly put to death. The inference would be, that He is alive and active in the world as the Risen Lord, and that they had done their utmost to put out of existence the Author of life and of healing. ¶ *His name*—(His office work as the Prince of Life.) This refers to the fact that they had wrought this miracle in His name, (vs. 6,) by virtue of His power—not as though the mere calling of His name had any charm or virtue in it. The explanation is given in the next clause emphatically. ¶ *Through faith*. That is, *upon—through—by means of* faith in His name. This faith was the *means*, and His name was the efficient cause, Matt. 17: 20. It is not the faith of the lame man that is here referred to, though he seems to have had some faith, (vss. 6, 7,) nor to produce faith in the lame man and in others,” as some understand. Christ’s name, power, authority, so set at nought by them, yet believed in by the Apostles, had produced the wondrous results which they beheld. There could be no mistake, as the facts were well known to them, ch. 4: 16. ¶ *Yea, the faith*. The Apostle gives every emphasis to this truth, and seeks to impress it. “When he is occupied about the showing and setting forth of the grace of Christ, he thinketh that he hath never spoken enough touching the same.”—*Calvin*. ¶ *By Him*. The

17 And now, brethren, I wot that 'through ignorance ye did it, as *did* also your rulers.

18 But "those things, which God before had shewed \*by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

† Luke 23: 34.  
John 16: 3.  
ch. 13: 27.  
1 Cor. 2: 8.  
1 Tim. 1: 13.  
u Luke 24: 44.  
ch. 26: 22.  
z Ps. 22.  
Isa. 50: 6, and  
53: 5, &c.  
Dan. 9: 26.  
1 Pet. 1: 10, 11.

faith which is wrought by Him, or "which owes its existence and effect to what He is and has done." See 1 Pet. 1: 21. *Bengel* says, "He refers not only the miracle to Christ, but the faith which he himself exercised." But this seems to state a further fact, and may refer to the lame man's faith. He is exalted to give not only healing of the body, but healing of soul—"repentance and remission of sins," and faith. ¶ *Perfect soundness*. This term, used only here, means *completeness, wholeness*, freedom from defects—signifying that the cure was entire, and that he was perfectly restored. ¶ *In the presence of you all*. He appeals to their knowledge of the facts as eye-witnesses. He also challenges their denial of the miracle, and this shows how clear it was to all that a miracle had been performed.

17. *And now brethren*. He tenderly addresses these murderers of our Lord as *brethren*—of the same nation and covenant, and his "kinsman according to the flesh," Rom. 12: 1. He speaks here in a conciliatory strain, and gives them any advantage which they could fairly claim from their ignorance. "Because it was to be doubted lest, being cast down with despair, they should refuse his doctrine, he doth a little lift them up."—*Calvin*. ¶ *I wot—I know—I am well aware*—as Christ Himself admitted, Luke 23: 34. ¶ *Through ignorance*. The ignorance was no sufficient excuse, for it was itself blamable, as the fruit of pride and prejudice. But the offense would have been more heinous if it had been committed against full light and gospel knowledge. Our Lord had declared on the cross, that they knew not what they did, Luke 23: 34. Paul declared the same, 1 Cor. 2: 8—and of himself, 1 Tim. 1: 13. Doubtless they did not know that He was the Messiah, though

the ignorance of some of them was more positive than that of others. Ignorance of the law is no extenuation of guilt. They were also guilty of their ignorance. It was their duty to have known the law. And many of them doubtless would have known Him to be the Messiah, but for their rebellious and proud unbelief. Yet how could they have done this awful deed if they had known what they were doing? ¶ *Your rulers*. "For had they known it, says Paul—(God's scheme of salvation by Christ)—they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory," (1 Cor. 2: 8.)

18. *But those things*—in reference to Christ's death. "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew Him not, nor yet the voice of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning Him." Ch. 13: 27. "Ignorance, he says, has made you guilty; yet God has brought that to pass which He had determined, that Christ should redeem men by His death."—*Calvin*. OBSERVE.—"Christ was not given up to the malice of the wicked, but God was the chief Author by whose will His only Son did suffer." *Calvin*. ¶ *Before had shewed. Had showed beforehand*—predicted. ¶ *All His prophets*. For "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev. 19: 10.) So in vs. 24, "all the prophets" are said to have spoken of the days of refreshing and restitution. The prophets are regarded here as a body actuated by one spirit, and that the testimony of Jesus. "The spirit of Christ was in them and testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow." 1 Pet. 1: 11. ¶ *Hath so fulfilled*. He hath fulfilled these things *thus*, in this way, by the stubborn, ignorant, murderous rejection of Christ on the part of the

y ch. 2: 38.

19 ¶ Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;

rulers. These were the means which God employed, and thus He made the wrath of man to praise Him. But OBSERVE.—(1) The murderers of Christ acted freely, they crucified and slew Him by wicked hands. (2) The pre-determining and predicting of the event did not lessen their guilt. (3) God's controlling of their wicked acts, so as to have His glory promoted, did not at all excuse them. So Joseph said unto his brethren, (Gen. 50: 20,) "But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good to bring to pass as it is this day to save much people alive." It is not the sinner nor his deeds that thus promote God's glory. It is neither his intention nor the tendency of his work. But it is God's wonderful prerogative that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His cause. Meanwhile OBSERVE—It is a great proof of the Scriptures that such an amazing plan could have been so brought about even by wicked agencies, according to ancient prophecies, all more or less bearing upon this point. And so the Risen Lord, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, (history and prophecy,) the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24: 27.)

19. Peter had thus preached to them the Risen Jesus as the author of this miracle and as their Messiah—whom they had rejected—and faith in His name as the grand source of power to men. Thus naturally he comes to preach to them Repentance, because he had shown to them that there was yet room for pardon and salvation. ¶ *Repent ye, therefore—change your minds.* The Gospel motive for repentance is involved in this. Christ and John the Baptist preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Peter here preaches, Repent, for the Messiah has come, and here is the proof of His living and exalted power. Thus the miracle was pointed to as the evidence that He whom they had put to death

was alive and active in the affairs of men. So in the case of Saul, where Christ said, "I am Jesus whom thou persecutest." And this work of healing was the further evidence that Christ was alive and active for human deliverance and salvation. ¶ *And be converted.* Rather, *turn.* As the fruit of repentance, carry on a true and thorough conversion. In regeneration, the sinner is passive. He is acted upon by Divine and efficacious power. Conversion follows this, and is a turning from all evil ways. In this the man is active, Ezekiel 18: 31. "Work out," or carry out, "your own salvation," graciously begun in you by God. (Phil. 2: 12.) Yet in conversion Divine grace is just as requisite as in regeneration. See Isa. 6: 10; Matt. 13: 15. ¶ *That—in order that.* Ch. 2: 38. They were exhorted to turn away from their sinful habits and tenets as a people, so that iniquity should not be their ruin (Ezek. 18: 30.) ¶ *Blotted out.* See Isa. 43: 25. God claims to be "He who blotteth out our transgressions for His name's sake, and will not remember our sins." Repentance does not merit pardon. It does not cancel sin, nor undo a wicked deed. But repentance is to this end—it looks to this, as the object and result to be attained. It is a turning the face to God—to seek Him—to cease forsaking and denying Him as He who forgives and saves. The term here rendered *blotted out*, "refers to the mode of expunging from a book or tablet, or canceling a debt—wiped out—smeared out." (It is used in Col. 2: 14; Rev. 3: 5. And in Rev. 7: 17 and 21: 4, it is used of wiping away tears. See Isa. 44: 22, "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.") The ancients wrote on tablets covered with wax, and when they wished to blot out what they had written, they used the flat end of the iron pen, and thus obliterated every trace of it. So the repenting sinner

20 And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you :

who turns to this Risen Saviour has the promise of an utter expunging of his sins—rubbing out every trace of them—from God's book of account. ¶ *When the times.* This does not mean that they would not be pardoned till some future time. The more literal rendering is "*that the times.*" This was the end they were to have in view, that "*the times and seasons*" which they had so anxiously inquired about, *might come.* These were also "*times of restoration*" or restitution, (ἀποκατάστασις πάντων) such as God had promised, though not such as they were looking for. He exhorts them to repent and turn to God, with a view to this, and as contributing to bring about the glorious consummation which God had promised by His prophets. They would have no part in these times unless they repented. OBSERVE.—It was with them as with the lame man. They gathered around their temple asking a very inferior blessing of temporal preferment, not dreaming that their crippled and helpless condition was the thing to be cured, and the refreshing and restoration to be sought. While they are asking an alms, God will have them receive healing and salvation, by trusting in the Name of this Crucified but Risen Redeemer. This miracle, therefore, is wrought as a sign for Israel. ¶ *Of refreshing.* As the same terms *καιροί* and *χρόνοι* are used in these two phrases, "*seasons of refreshing*" and "*times of restitution,*" and as the term in vs. 20 rendered "*restitution,*" is the same term as is used in vs. 6, rendered "*restore,*" and more properly here (the noun) to be rendered "*restoration,*" it is plain that Peter refers the Jews to that very questioning and to the reply of our Lord, ch. 1 : 6, 7. These are "*the times and the seasons.*" And he addressed his hearers as directly concerned in bringing them about. Connected with the ancient promises for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, is the covenant promise of seasons of refreshing "*from the presence of the (Risen) Lord.*" These

seasons are such as at Pentecost, which He shed forth, (ch. 2 : 33,) and such as should result now from their repentance, swelling the numbers of the Church to five thousand, ch. 4 : 4; and such as Joel predicted as coming upon all flesh for the millennial times. These are like the seasons of spring to the earth from genial rains, and the outpouring of the Spirit is likened to these refreshingshowsers from heaven. These times look constantly forward to the "*times (epochs) of restoration,*" which are but the glorious consummation, as a millennium, the reign of Christ on the earth, when His kingdom will have fully come. There may be a reference to that time as the Great Sabbath and Jubilee of the Church.

20. *And he shall send.* Rather, *And that he may send.* Christ is to come again. This was their great expectation, according as the angels announced it at the Ascension, (ch. 1 : 11.) He is to come for the final consummation at the last Judgment. Peter declares that the times of refreshing are connected with this. The millennial times, when, according to the fullness of Joel's prophecy, the Spirit shall be poured out upon all flesh, will be a coming of Christ in power and glory to reign. And this shall usher in the consummation—the restoration or restitution of all things promised by the prophets. Thus He would "*restore the kingdom to Israel.*" Meanwhile, it is necessary, according to the Divine plan, that the heavens receive Him until the final consummation—that, though active in this work and sending down these refreshings, He should be officiating in heaven, and exalted as "*Head over all things to the Church,*" (Eph. 1 : 22)—"*crowned with glory,*" (Heb. 2 : 9.) See 2 Pet. 3 : 9. OBSERVE.—(1) The second coming is here spoken of as that for which the first was only preparatory—and is therefore this "*sending*" or mission of Christ. (2) The conversion of the Jews, especially, is closely connected with the consummation of all

<sup>a</sup> ch. 1: 11.

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 17: 31.

<sup>b</sup> Luke 1: 70.

21 \* Whom the heaven must receive until the times of  
 \* restitution of all things, <sup>b</sup> which God hath spoken by the  
 mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

things. They shall be brought in when the fullness of the Gentiles is come in, (Rom. 11: 25.) (3) The repentance and conversion of sinners are the condition of the speedy approach of these blessed times. (4) All may help by their conversion and by laboring for that of others, in bringing forward the millennial times. ¶ *Which before was preached.* The more correct text reads: "*Who was before appointed to you*" as your Messiah—Him who was predestined as your Messiah—namely, Jesus. This is the most approved reading, found in the ancient Syriac and Arabic versions.

21. *Whom the heaven.* Rather, *Whom heaven*—literally, *whom it is necessary that heaven receive.* The Apostle takes this rapid survey of the entire Gospel Dispensation, and here accounts for the present temporary absence of Christ from the earth. The Jews expected their Messiah to reign in the flesh. ¶ *Must receive, (dei.)* This necessity, according to the Scriptural usage, is that which grows out of the Divine plan. It is the necessity which belongs to the Divine arrangements. Some read: "Who must possess, or take possession of, or receive the heaven." But the English version gives the most correct and approved rendering. It was necessary that Christ should enter heaven while the glorious consummation is going forward, and until it comes fully to pass. He needed to appear there in the holiest of all as our Great High Priest, (Heb. 7: 15,) and Forerunner, (Heb. 6: 20,) occupying His throne there as Head over all things to the Church, (Eph. 1: 20-22,) and as exalted "to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel," (ch. 5: 31,) and for sending the Comforter, John 16. See 1 Pet. 3: 22. ¶ *Until the times of restitution.* Christ shall continue in His heavenly abode until these appointed times shall arrive, called here "the times of restitution," &c. The term here used

means restoration, and refers back again to the term employed by the Apostles in their inquiry, ch. 1: 6, "Wilt thou at this time *restore again* the kingdom to Israel?" Our Lord had answered them generally that as to the precise periods they were not to know, but their power should come from the Holy Ghost, so that they should be witnesses to Him throughout the world. And now that consummation is further contemplated—the universal diffusion of the Gospel, called by our Lord "the *Regeneration*:" when the Son of man shall come in His glory, and when the restoration of the kingdom should so far be realized to them as that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, (Matt. 19: 28.) The term here rendered "until" refers forward to the arrival of these times as a future event, but does not exclude the idea of "*during*," as regards the operations going on toward that result. He must remain in the heaven during these Gospel times, and until the millennial times have ushered in the consummation. OBSERVE.—As Christ is here declared to be bodily in heaven, and under the necessity of remaining there until the end or winding up of this closing dispensation, He cannot be bodily present in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. "The natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here." ¶ *Of all things.* This restoration or restitution or regeneration is that creation of "new heavens and a new earth," predicted by Isaiah, and referred to by Peter (2 Pet. 3: 13,) in his Epistle, and by John in the close of the Revelation, (Rev. 21: 1-5.) The terms here used were employed by our Lord, (Matt. 17: 11,) in speaking of *Elias* as to *restore all things*, (using the verb, corresponding with the noun here,) and this is explained as referring directly to the thorough reformation which John the Baptist was to undertake as

22 For Moses truly said unto the fathers, \* A prophet <sup>c Deut. 18: 15, 18: 19, ch. 7: 37.</sup> shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.

a preparation for Christ, (Luke 1: 17.) This restoration or new creation, however, was in a higher sense to be effected only by Christ himself, as the Great Restorer from the ruins of the fall. The issue here contemplated is that often referred to in the Old Testament by Isaiah and David, &c., (Ps. 110: 1,) and in the New Testament, as the subjugation of all enemies, (1 Cor. 15,) the reconciling of all things to Himself, both in earth and in heaven, (Col. 1: 20,) and the *recapitulating*—gathering together in one, under one Head—all things in Christ, (Eph. 1: 10,) of Jews and Gentiles. **OBSERVE.**—To the Jews the idea of a universal restoration was familiar in their Jubilee, when all forfeited estates were to be restored. And Christ is our *Goel* or “Kinsman Redeemer,” whose office it is to redeem our forfeited inheritance. It is also thought by some that that very year was a year of Jubilee, A. D. 30. ¶ *Which God hath spoken.* This consummation is the great leading topic of prophecy from the first promise in the garden to the close of the Old Testament. And again the New Testament prophets reiterate it, as here. **OBSERVE.**—From the whole tenor of these prophecies, it is plain that the Restoration promised is not, as some vainly imagine, a recovery of fallen angels and of the lost souls in hell. This is nowhere predicted nor promised, but the contrary. ¶ *Since the world began.* Rather, *From the beginning*—from the earliest times of prophecy. This would show the hearers that the Apostles did not reject their prophets, but rather gloried in them and expounded them. **OBSERVE.**—(1) “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” (Rev. 19: 10.) (2) The coming of Christ in glory is a truth most terrible to His foes, and an incentive to repentance. We do not sufficiently feel the force of this great

motive to diligence, that to us, at least, the day of the Lord speedily cometh, as a thief in the night. We are to look for and hasten unto the coming of the day of God as at farthest near, and at any rate hastening, 2 Pet. 3: 12.

22. *For Moses truly said.* The Apostle having referred generally to their prophets as having predicted the glorious Restoration through Christ, now refers to *Moses*, in whom they trusted, (John 5: 45,) and shows that he had predicted Christ as a Prophet, and had commanded obedience to Him on pain of excommunication from the commonwealth of Israel. ¶ *Unto the fathers.* To their ancestors in common—Peter’s and theirs. ¶ *A prophet.* Though Moses here foretold of the succession of prophets that God would raise up, that succession was regarded as culminating in Christ, the greatest of Prophets. See Deut. 18: 15–19. He was called “*that Prophet*”—“that Prophet which was to come.” See John 1: 21. This promise to the nation of a line of prophets, was as a security to them against the false reliances of the heathen, such as divinations and necromancy. Each of the prophets was one of a line that led on to Christ. Each prefigured Him and gave further promise of His coming. And as none of all the prophets fulfilled this description of being like unto Moses, in most important particulars, the Jews expected “the coming one,” though often with gross misunderstanding of his nature and work. ¶ *Unto you.* To be your Teacher and Guide. ¶ *Like unto me.* Christ alone was like unto Moses as the Mediator of a covenant and the Lawgiver of Israel—and a Deliverer of His people, and their Leader out of bondage through the wilderness—the Head of a dispensation and a Ruler to be obeyed. See Gen. 3: 19; ch. 7: 35. The chief reference in the original passage is to the office of Mediator.



23 And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul which will not hear ~~that~~ prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24 Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow

The idea is that "since the Israelites had been unable to endure the terrors of the Divine Majesty, God would, at some future time, send to them another Mediator, through whom He could communicate with them as He had done through Moses." Yet Moses was far inferior to Christ. See Gal. 3 : 19; Heb. 9 : 15. And now their inquiries of John and of Christ, as to their being this Prophet, show that they expected Him, John 1 : 21, 25. *Moses spake truly*, says Peter. He does not dispute nor discredit Moses. Shall they do so, and thus deny the testimony of the Great Founder of their nation?—That God had now raised up this Prophet and sent Him to them, he shows and presses home, (vs. 26.) ¶ *Shall ye hear*. They were thus most solemnly charged to receive the instructions of this Prophet, and yield obedience to Him in all things whatsoever He should say unto them, ch. 2 : 21. **OBSERVE**.—It was in Moses that Christ was first clearly set forth and typified as a *Personal Saviour*.

23. *It shall come to pass*. Literally, *It shall be*. These words are inserted by Peter in making the citation from the Hebrew, in order, as the Spirit prompted him, to arrest their special attention. This is not Peter's language that follows, but that of Moses, whom they boasted and professed to believe and trust. "Moses wrote of me," said Christ, (John 5 : 46.) How dare they so deny Moses and disobey the predicted Prophet of prophets, in the face of this judgment so plainly denounced against such transgression? ¶ *Shall be destroyed*. Literally in the Hebrew passage it reads, *I will require it of him*—I will take vengeance upon him. This declares that God Himself would visit punishment upon such an one. Peter uses this common mode of expression to denote the kind of punishment, namely, cutting off from the body of the people. Exod. 12 : 15, 19; 30 : 32; Numbers 19 : 13. This

phrase was familiar, and was understood as signifying excommunication from the special privileges of God's covenant people, so as to be regarded as heathen. This was the Old Testament language for expressing the most fearful judgment of God. (See 1 Cor. 16 : 22.) So it was enjoined, (Exod. 22 : 20,) that an apostate Israelite should be anathema, or as our English version reads, "utterly destroyed." The New Testament language is, "shall be cast into outer (outside) darkness"—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord," (2 Thess. 1 : 9; Matt. 8 : 12.)

24. Peter's aim is here to re-assert the unanimity of the prophets (their own boasted prophets,) in regard to these glorious times of the Church in the Messiah's days. Samuel is here named as the head of the prophetic line, because in his time prophecy became an established function, and an order of prophets was instituted, of whom he was the head. A "school of the prophets" was founded under him. 1 Sam. 19 : 20. Besides, the song of Hannah at his birth was referred to and adopted in part by Mary at the salutation of Elizabeth in regard to the holy child Jesus, and thus Mary reaches her hand over the whole line to Hannah. See 1 Sam. 2 : 1-8; 10 : 35. Besides, only two prophets are spoken of between Moses and Samuel, and these only delivering occasional messages. Thenceforth as the kings were allowed to the people, the prophets were established as a regular order, to stand between God and the king; and these were from Samuel down; and from this time onward the days of the Great Prophet have been the subject of prophecy by these very prophets, who thus confessed that they were neither of them *the Prophet* whom Moses foretold. ¶ *As many as have spoken*. Though all of them had not perhaps in very words spoken of the glorious consummation in Messiah's time,

after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days.

25 <sup>d ch. 2:29, Rom. 9:4, 8, and 15:8, Gal. 3:26.</sup> Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto

“the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,”—“the spirit of Christ was in them, and testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.” (Luke 24: 27.) The passages in Samuel here more especially referred to, may be 1 Sam. 2: 10-35; 2 Sam. 7: 16. After the application of these predictions to our Lord, the Jewish Rabbis, who had always before confessed their reference to the Messiah, tried to prove their reference to some other of the prophets and any other than Christ, though in our Lord's time it was universally admitted by them that the Great Prophet had not yet appeared. John 1: 21; 6: 14. OBSERVE.—As the kingdom of Israel began in Samuel's time, and flourished in the time of David and Solomon, prophecy more clearly set forth the kingdom of Christ, and the mother of Samuel is the first who makes mention of the Lord's *King* and *Anointed*, (Messiah.) 1 Sam. 2: 10-35.

25. Peter now brings the matter of personal privilege and obligation home to them, by showing their relation to God's ancient people and covenant. He shows them that they were inheritors of these promises—that these very prophets were their ancestors, and that these were reasons why they should apply to themselves the benefits that Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, “the hope of Israel,” brings. They were *children* (or *sons*) of the covenant, because they were included in the outward pale of God's Church, “to whom were committed the oracles of God,” (Rom. 3: 2,) “whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came.” (Rom. 9: 4.) As the chosen seed of Abraham, and the covenant people, they enjoyed very distinguished privi-

leges. The blessings promised to Abraham to come through the Messiah, were brought very nigh to them. They had thus a birthright by an outward calling which specially obligated them to the obedience of faith. “They were bound to act as the true, spiritual children of faithful Abraham. For he argueth thus, ‘God made his covenant with our fathers—therefore we, who are their posterity, are comprehended in the covenant.’ I grant, indeed, that many which are the children of the faithful according to the flesh are counted spurious and bastards, because they thrust themselves out of the holy progeny through their unbelief. But this doth no whit hinder the Lord from calling and admitting the seed of the godly into fellowship of grace: And so although the common election be not effectual in all, yet may it set open a gate for the specially elect.”—*Calvin*. See Rom. 11: 23. This is the tenor of the Abrahamic covenant. With the believing parents it includes the infant offspring also; and by this household feature God promises to be a God to the children of His people. The children of the covenant are thus born within the outward pale of the Church—are children of the Church—the seal of the covenant has been applied to them in infancy, and they are born in such a relation to God as no other children are born in, and they are put under special obligations to act as becomes the children of God. Yet, as in case of these very Jews, if they reject Christ, the covenant does not save them, in their unbelief and rebellion. And if they are only “Jews outwardly” and not “Jews inwardly,” they are not saved by their hereditary privilege. They only bring upon themselves deeper condemnation. And unless they give evidence of inward piety, no matter how holy their ancestors were, they must perish. Alas! “many

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 12:3, &  
18:18, & 22:18  
& 26:4 & 28:14  
Gal. 3:8.  
<sup>f</sup> Matthe 10:5,  
and 15:24.  
Luke 24:47.  
ch. 13:32, 33:46.  
<sup>g</sup> vs. 22.  
<sup>h</sup> Matt. 1:21.

Abraham, <sup>a</sup>And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26 <sup>r</sup>Unto you first, God, naving raised up his Son Jesus, <sup>s</sup>sent him to bless you, <sup>b</sup>in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.

shall come from the east and from the west. (who were born of Gentile and uncovenanted parents,) and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom shall be cast out." The Apostle here exhorts these Jews, though they were children of the covenant by birth, to turn away from their iniquities, (26,) and that without such true, hearty repentance and embrace of Christ, they would not be saved. ¶ *And in thy seed.* Gen. 3:29; 4:1-7. (1) This blessing promised in the covenant to all families of the earth, was to come in the Abrahamic seed as the lineal posterity through whom Christ should come, the chosen people, the visible Church, through whom the covenant blessings should be transmitted to all generations and be extended to the Gentiles. (2) This blessing could come only IN CHRIST—who was most eminently Abraham's SEED, (Gal. 3:16,) the Head of the body—the Son in the house, greater than Moses and Abraham, Heb. 3:6; 7:4, &c. for whose coming in the covenant line the family of Abraham was chosen. OBSERVE.—The Messiah and His people, are often in the Old Testament set forth as a complex Person—He the Head and they the body—and both are spoken of as "the Servant of Jehovah." Sometimes with more special reference to Christ and at other times to the people. Isa. 42:1; 52:13. So they were both to be "a light to the Gentiles." (Isa. 42:6; Luke 2:32.) And accordingly He Himself says at one time, "I am the light of the world," (John 8:12,) and at another time, "Ye are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:14.) ¶ *The kindreds.* It is expressed in Gen. 12:3; 28:14, as all the *tribes* ("families") of the earth—in Gen. 18:18; 22:18, as all the *nations* of the earth. Here the

term denotes those who have a common ancestor, and is applied to kindred or families. The promise was that by the coming of the Messiah in the line of Abraham's chosen seed, all the nations of the earth (not the Jews only) should be blessed. The extension of covenant privileges to the Gentiles, so that the Church of God should embrace all kindreds, without regard to nation, was clearly foretold by the prophets. The Apostles were certainly aware of this, though they seem to have expected that the Gentiles would come into the Church through the Jewish pale, by Circumcision and the Passover, instead of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This was the scruple that Peter had, (ch. 10) in regard to the admission of the Gentiles.

26. *Unto you first.* See vs. 22. This was the birthright of the Jewish people, as Peter here declares unto them. They had the precedence above other nations. The call was to them *first*. The Gospel call was first made to them. The Apostles were charged to begin their work at Jerusalem, Luke 24:47, (though Christ was lately crucified there,) and the law was to go forth out of Zion. Here Peter implies that the Gospel was to be preached to the heathen. (Isa. 2:3.) In their Apostolic labors for gathering the early Christian Church, they were to preach first to the Jews, and make to them the first offer of the Gospel, and only upon their rejection of it, (as at Antioch in Pisidia, &c.) did they turn to the Gentiles. Acts 13:46. They recognized this as the established order of their ministrations. Our Lord confined His public ministry to the Jews, except incidentally, as to the Samaritan and Syrophenician woman. ¶ *Having raised up.* As Moses had predicted that "a Prophet should the Lord their God raise up unto them," &c. (vs. 22,) so here Peter

## CHAPTER IV.

1 AND as they spake unto the people, the priests, and the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them:

¶ Or, ruler.  
Luke 22:4.  
ch. 5:24.

shows that this is fulfilled in Christ, and that this Prophet of God's appointing is *His Son Jesus*. This does not refer to His being raised from the dead, but raised up for His work—brought forward in His human nature, of the seed of Abraham and David, Rom. 1: 1, and commissioned according to prophecy. ¶ *His Son*. Rather, *His Servant*. The term is not the common one for *Son*, (*υιός*) but *παῖς*, the same as is used in vs. 13. It was as “the Servant of Jehovah” that Isaiah prophesied of Christ often, in the character of the Head of the covenant people; “His Servant to bring Jacob again to Him,” Isaiah 49: 5, 6; 42: 43: 10; “And my Servant, whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me and understand that I am He,” &c. ¶ *Sent Him*. This refers to the appointment and mission of Jesus Christ and His ministry, continued now by His Spirit. ¶ *To bless you*. Rather, *Blessing you*—as one whose province it is to bless you; and this is the way in which He does it—not in any vain, temporal promotion, such as you may imagine, but in *turning away every one of you from his iniquities*. This is what He aims at, and proposes in His Gospel. So this Apostle had already preached to them to repent, and while he urged them to turn, he declared also to them Christ's power and offer to turn them; exalted as He is to give repentance unto Israel and remission of sins, as the great gift and blessing of the Gospel, ch. 5: 31. OBSERVE.—(1) How great is the blessing that the Gospel brings to us Gentiles. (2) Baptized children are “by nature the children of wrath, even as others,” (Eph. 2: 3,) and though they are children of the covenant and of the Church, they are not the spiritual children of God except by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3: 26. (3) God does not send the Saviour to

bless us in our sins, but to bless us in turning us from our sins. (4) We may judge whether we are of the saved or not, by inquiring whether the salvation from sin is going on within us: by examining whether this work of *turning us from our iniquities* is going forward or not.

## CHAPTER IV.

§ 7. THE FIRST HOSTILITY—(SADDUCEES)—ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN—FURTHER GROWTH OF THE CHURCH TO FIVE THOUSAND MEMBERS. *Jerusalem*. Ch. 4: 1–37.

Peter was addressing the multitude in Solomon's porch of the temple, ch. 3: 11. The Jewish authorities thus pressed with their guilt, must either confess it, or suppress the testimony against them. As the kingdom of light advances under the ministry of these Apostles, both by miracle and the means of grace, so the kingdom of darkness is also aroused, and sets itself in active opposition. This has been the history of the Church in all ages. Exod. 7: 11. Satan aims to nip the truth in the bud. But God has ordained that by these very conflicts the truth shall be brought out to view in its most precious aspects, and the Church militant be disciplined for the glories of the Church triumphant. We shall see how at every step of her advance the ground is sharply contested, so that through much tribulation every conquest shall be made for entering fully into possession of the kingdom. This record belongs not many days after Pentecost. Some think the festival had not yet closed.

1. *As they spake*. It was the strong and wide impression that this miracle and discourse were making upon the people, which aroused the public officers against the Apostles. It was “as

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 22:23.  
Acts 23:8.

2 \*Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead

3 And they laid hands on them, and put *them* in hold unto the next day: for it was now eventide.

*they spake unto the people*" that the assault upon them began from three classes. ¶ *The priests.* These were the religious teachers of the people, and they were offended because these men, who were not taught in the Rabbinical schools, (vs. 13,)—should be assuming to teach, and thus be bringing their priestly office into discredit before the multitude. See Mal. 2:7. The priests and Levites were also stationed as guards of the temple. It was probably in this capacity that they now interpose, under their commandant, who is here called, "the Captain of the Temple." This was not a Roman officer, as some have supposed, but a Jewish one: the twenty-four bands of guards had each its leader or commander. But a commander-in-chief is here spoken of. These priests and this chief officer of the watch would take occasion from the symptoms of popular disturbance. But *the Sadducees* were probably the chief movers in the opposition. They had a controlling influence in the Sanhedrim at this time, as would seem, (ch. 5:17.) They were the first to take an open stand against the doctrine of the Apostles, because the Resurrection, which it was their business to proclaim, and which Peter now preached in the strongest light, they utterly denied. They were the more bitter now in the denial of it, because it was set forth in the case of Jesus whom they had crucified. It was the Pharisees who persecuted Christ because He exposed their hypocrisy. These were so opposed to the Sadducees that they now rather sided with the Apostles from this party feeling—or perhaps did not think it worth while to persecute them. ¶ *Came upon them.* The term here used implies commonly a hostile intent—that they came against them, using their authority and force against their pro-

ceedings. See ch. 6:12; 17:5; Luke 20:1.

2. *Being grieved.* This term means rather *aggrieved*—(*vexed and indignant.*) These authorities of the Jewish people, who ought to have taught them the true doctrine of Christ, were grievously offended at the Apostles for teaching it. See Matt. 21:23. Instead of embracing the truth themselves, they are most aggrieved at seeing their office of "teaching the people" assumed by private, unofficial men. ¶ *Through Jesus.* Lit., *In Jesus—in His case.* With the Sadducees the special vexation was, that these new teachers *preached* (proclaimed) *in the case of Jesus*, the doctrine of the Resurrection—that is, that they *proclaimed* the fact of Christ's Resurrection as a proof of the doctrine, and published it as exemplified in His personal case. Their office was to bear witness of Christ's Resurrection, as they were raised up to be personally eye-witnesses of the fact, ch. 1:22. And in proclaiming this great fundamental truth, they placed the doctrine of the Resurrection in a light the most strong, and yet most offensive to these murderers of Christ, ch. 5:28.

3. *They laid hands on them.* These officers of the guard, with the countenance of the Sadducees, arrested the Apostles and *put them in hold*—that is, *in prison*—literally, *a place of custody.* There was such a place near the temple, and probably under ground. ¶ *Eventide.* They could not proceed with any trial until the next day, as it was already evening, and it was contrary to the law to try any one and pass sentence at night. The Jews reckoned two evenings—one at three o'clock and the other at six. This must have been the latter of these, as they went to the temple at three, (vs. 1.) It was, therefore, in the dusk of

4 Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

5 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that their rulers, and elders, and scribes,

6 And <sup>2</sup>Annas the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John, <sup>2</sup>Luke 3:2, John 11:49, and 18:13. and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem.

the evening when the Apostles were seized. Thus, says *Bengel*, their faith was sharpened.

4. *Howbeit*. Notwithstanding this persecution of the Apostles by the Jewish authorities, which was calculated to keep back many from joining them, there were many believers in the Word, (the Gospel,) who professed their faith; and thus the Church of one hundred and twenty, (ch. 1: 15,) which, at Pentecost, had three thousand added, and still others daily, (ch. 2: 47,) was increased till the number of the members amounted to *five thousand*. This was probably not many days after the Pentecost, and some have thought it was before the close of that festival. But see ch. 2: 47. This shows the rapidly increasing numbers of the Church, in the face of persecution. And such was everywhere the history of its advance in the first centuries, proving the Divine presence and power with His people. ¶ *Of the men*. Of the persons—the members; as it is said, (ch. 1: 15,) “the number of the names,” and in ch. 2: 41, “three thousand souls.” ¶ *Was*—literally, *became*, or *had become*; and not, as some think, that five thousand were converted at this time.

5. The Apostles are now put on trial before the Sanhedrim, the highest court of the nation, as soon as the day time arrived, when it was lawful to carry on and issue a trial before the court. ¶ *Their rulers*, &c. These terms together, denote the different classes who made up the Sanhedrim, (vs. 15.) See Matt. 2: 4; 26: 59; ch. 5: 21. It is oftener written “the chief priests, with the elders and scribes,” (Mark 15: 1,) “chief priests and elders,” (vs. 23.) Luke here speaks of “*their rulers*,” as though writing for Gentiles, and mean-

ing the rulers of the Jews. The term “rulers” may relate to the court in general, and the two following classes, together with those mentioned in vs. 6, will then denote those who made up the court, (see Ezra 10: 8,) all of whom were “*rulers*,” (ch. 3: 17; Luke 24: 20; John 3: 9.) ¶ *Elders—Presbyters*. These were a class of rulers in the synagogues, some of whom sat in this highest court. *Elders*, as a class of civil and church officers, had been known among the Jews from the time of the Exodus. They are called “elders of Israel,” (vs. 8.) Stephen was condemned by these, (ch. 6: 12.) Paul was persecuted by these, (ch. 23: 14, 24; 25: 15.) ¶ *Scribes*. Writers and expounders and guardians of the law. The elders were the representatives of the people, and the scribes were the spiritual leaders.

6. *And Annas*. This man, who is also spoken of in the Gospel by Luke, (ch. 3: 2,) with Caiaphas, as being both of them high priests, was predecessor of the latter, and his father-in-law. This is he to whom our Lord was first taken at his trial, (John 18: 13,) as having some priority of rank. This is accounted for from the fact that while by the Jewish law the office of high priest was held for life, it was shifted at pleasure by the Roman authorities. Hence, while but one would be the high priest in the Jewish view, the office might have passed to several others by the authority of the Romans, who deposed and appointed whom they pleased. Here Annas is designated as the high priest, (in the eye of the Jewish law the only one,) while Caiaphas is named also, as holding the title under the Romans. See ch. 22: 5, notes. ¶ *John and Alexander*. These were relatives of Annas and

<sup>c</sup> Exod. 2: 14.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. 21: 23.  
ch. 7: 27.

<sup>d</sup> Luke 12: 11  
12.

7 And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, <sup>e</sup> By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?

8 <sup>a</sup> Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel,

Caiaphas, and must have been well known; though besides this, little can be said of them with certainty. ¶ *The kindred.* Of the family of the high priest, "whose ancestors lately enjoyed the high priesthood."—*Grotius.* The attendance of so many persons of eminent station, here expressly named, shows the excited state of public feeling; and the interest felt in the case personally by Annas and Caiaphas is shown by the fact that their priestly line were all summoned to attend. Five sons of Annas reached the high priesthood. What wonder that these two men, who had taken such a conspicuous part in the death of Christ, were agitated now by the preaching of His actual Resurrection, and by the fact that it was believed by increasing multitudes! Some take *γένους* to mean "order," instead of "family." So Josephus uses the term. In this case, it would refer to the chief priests—heads of the twenty-four courses, who performed a weekly service in the temple. These formed part of the Sanhedrim, (Matt. 26: 3; ch. 5: 24.) ¶ *At Jerusalem.* This was formerly the only place where this court sat. But just prior to the time of our Lord, the increase of crime was so great that the court was removed from place to place. (See *Lightfoot.*) Others suppose that this refers to the summoning of some members from the neighboring towns, on this occasion.

7. *In the midst.* The Apostles were placed in open court, before the Sanhedrim and the people. The court itself sat on an elevated platform in a semicircle. The lame man was with the Apostles, (vs. 14.) ¶ *By what power.* The term here used is that commonly rendered *miracle*, and refers to the efficacious power. The fact of the wonderful cure was admitted. The fact that it was by some preternatural

power is implied in this questioning. If they should answer that it was by Divine Power, then they would be challenged to prove their commission, as it was the business of the Sanhedrim to try the pretensions of all such as claimed a Divine mission. If, however, this was not the claim, it would have been ascribed to sorcery, and thus the Apostles would have been condemned to the severest penalty of the law. A similar question was put to our Lord, (Matt. 21: 23.) ¶ *By what name.* Supposing it to have been done by sorcery, then they would ask, "By the invoking or pronouncing of what magical name it had been done." The Jews were familiar with such a magical use of the names of the patriarchs or of God, in their exorcisms. They knew that this deed had been done in the name of Jesus, but they accused Jesus of casting out devils by Beelzebub, and they meant to insinuate that it was likewise with the Apostles. ¶ *This.* Not the teaching or the preaching of the Resurrection, but the miracle is here meant. See vs. 9, 10. The pronoun "ye" is emphatic. This is the very question that will bring out the choicest truth, (vs. 10.) So assaults upon the Church have brought the truth out in fuller light and force, as the Romish errors brought out the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians to be more studied and prized and published.

8. *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* This phrase refers always to a special miraculous gift of the Spirit. See ch. 2: 4. The Apostles had been promised such an inspiration whenever they should be thus arraigned before rulers for Christ's sake, (Luke 12: 12; 21: 14, 15; Mark 13: 11.) ¶ *Ye rulers of the people.* This is the ancient title of the high court of the Jews; and the Apostle acknowledges their authority,

9. If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole;

10 Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, \*that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, \* ch. 3: 6-16. whom ye crucified, †whom God raised from the dead, even † ch. 2: 24. by him doth this man stand here before you whole.

and calls them "rulers" also, (and "builders," vs. 11,) and refers to them under this name, (vs. 26, 27.) ¶ *Elders of Israel.* These were anciently the heads of the tribes—"the chiefs of the fathers of the children of Israel"—called Presbyters, who were "rulers of the people" from the beginning, (Ex. 12: 21.) This high court of the Jewish nation, called the Sanhedrim, consisted of seventy (or seventy-two) persons of rank—made up chiefly of the chief priests of the twenty-four courses who served weekly in the temple: and of elders or presbyters, the most ancient class of officers among the Jews; and of scribes—the lawyers, writers and teachers of the law.

9. *If we, &c.*—as though it were scarcely credible. Or rather, *Since we are this day called to account.* The particle "*if*" is sometimes used in this sense. "I, *if* I be lifted up"—not implying doubt, but rather conveying the idea of certainty. So Eph. 3: 2, "*If* ye have heard"—rather, "*Since, or as surely as ye have heard.*" The term here rendered "*examined*" means *called to account*, as a defendant or witness. See 12: 19; 28: 18. ¶ *Of the good deed—upon, or in respect to a good deed.* It could not be denied that it was "*a good deed*"—and as it was done to an *impotent* (weak, disabled,) man, what fault could be found with them for this? Yet they pretended only to inquire by virtue of their authority as the spiritual guardians of the people, *by what means* they had done this. Literally, *in what—whereby*—in possession of what preternatural power. ¶ *He. This one*—emphatic. The man was present in company with the Apostles, vs. 14. **Observe.**—Modern infidelity goes beyond the Sanhedrim, and denies the possibility of the miracle.

10. *Be it known, &c.* This is the

bold stand that Peter now takes. The very man who at the trial of his Lord was so afraid as to deny Him at the questioning of a maid—the man who declared with an oath that he did not know Him—now does not shrink before this high court of inquisition, but most boldly in the face of all the danger confessed his Lord, and denounced these judges as His murderers. **Observe.**—This was because Christ had looked upon Peter with a converting look—because Christ had not denied Peter. Now Simon proves himself a rock. ¶ *To all the people.* Peter, in addressing the court, remembered that he was preaching Christ to the nation whom they represented. He was the Apostle of the circumcision. ¶ *By the name.* They had asked *by what name* this miraculous cure had been wrought. He replies, *by the name of Jesus.* They had, by their own question, implied that it must be a powerful name, unless they could think of a Satanic miracle. (Matt. 12: 24.) And as the Jewish prophets were required to work their miracles in the name of the true Jehovah, this declaration of Peter would be understood as claiming Jesus Christ to be Jehovah, which the Sanhedrim would pronounce to be false. See ch. 3: 6-16, where Peter professes to work by the power of this name alone. Peter uses this very title and name of Jesus in the act of healing, vs. 6. He is "*Jesus,*" as Saviour—"Christ," as the Messiah of the Jews, predicted in the Old Testament, and He is "*of Nazareth,*" as the despised name which followed Him to the cross, but which is thus to be glorified. Yet, as the Sanhedrim denied that Jesus was the Christ, or Messiah, this profession would be very offensive to them. ¶ *Whom ye crucified.* Peter now brings home to them their own guilty part in the crucifixion.



g Ps. 118: 22.  
Isa. 28: 16.  
Matt. 21: 42.

h Matt. 1: 21.  
ch. 10: 43.  
1 Tim. 2: 5, 6.

11 <sup>g</sup> This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12 <sup>h</sup> Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

They were the persecuting leaders exciting the people, and urging Pilate to pronounce the sentence. These, therefore, were responsible for this *bloody deed*—the most opposite to their “*good deed*.”

¶ *Whom God raised.* Peter, in the face of the Sadducees, further declares the glorious fact of Christ's Resurrection. This would prove that Jehovah, the God whom they acknowledged, had owned Christ and His work. And this, of course, would prove them “guilty before God.” OBSERVE.—He had already charged this crime upon the people, ch. 2: 23; 3: 14, 15. Now the questioning of the Sanhedrim gives him opportunity to expose their criminality as prime-movers in the death of Christ. ¶ *By Him.* Or *by this* (name,) yet the next verse continues the reference, and shows it to be Christ Himself. Of course it was not *by His name*, as having any magical charm, but by Himself that the miracle was wrought.

11. *This (Jesus) is the Stone* referred to in Psalm 118: 22. The passage had already been cited by Christ as applying to Himself. See Matt. 21: 42, *Notes*. It is quoted or referred to in the New Testament as referring to Christ, Eph. 2: 20; 1 Peter 2: 4-6. Peter inserts *ὑμῶν*—“*of you*”—as his inspired interpretation and application of the prophecy herein fulfilled. ¶ *Of you builders—the builders.* The priests and the scribes were by their office appointed to be *the builders* of the Jewish Church: to teach the people the true religion, and to attend to the watch and care of the Church, as the Apostles and Christian ministry were to do under the New Testament. Yet these Jewish leaders had *set at naught, repudiated*, Christ as the foundation Stone, on which alone the Church could be built. This explains His humiliation, at which they stumbled. ¶ *Head of the corner.* Though these officers of the Jewish

Church and people rejected Christ and refused to build upon Him, He had become the corner stone—the “chief corner stone”—as the key-stone at the corner, on which both walls rest, and which holds the whole building, and without which it must fall, vs. 12. Peter, in his Epistle, dwells upon this only foundation, in the sense in which it is expounded in the next verse. Their rejection of Christ went to prove Him to be the true stone prophesied. “This Jesus” is that stone, which, as the prophets foresaw, “you builders” have rejected as a refuse stone. See Isa. 28: 16; Rom. 9: 33. OBSERVE.—(1) God's gracious purposes cannot be frustrated by wicked men or devils. He will save whom He wills. (2) Christ's humiliation was no good ground of objection to His claims, for His exaltation followed.

12. *Salvation.* Literally, *the salvation*. This Jesus is the author of all salvation. The miraculous cure of the body is only the lower department of His salvation—only points to the higher work of healing the soul. *The salvation* which is above all, is by Him alone and not any other. The miracles of Christ and His Apostles were redemptive acts. They delivered men from calamities which they were suffering by the fall: and they were also designed to point them to a higher deliverance from sin and death and hell. *The salvation* proclaimed by Jesus comprehends all deliverance, and will at length restore all the ruins of the fall—banish all sickness, sorrow and want as the fruit of sin—so that to the believer there shall be no more pain. Rev. 21: 4; 22: 3. His name was called Jesus because He should save His people from their sins—in their power and consequence. This declaration of the Apostle was intended to cut off their vain theories, and their hopes of some

13 ¶ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John,<sup>1</sup> and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 11: 23.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 1: 27.

other Messiah. ¶ *For.* The reason is given why the great salvation is placed so exclusively in the hands of Christ. ¶ *None other name.* They had asked the question, "*by whose name*" this work had been done? He here declares that there is *none other name under heaven*, (than this of Jesus Christ,) which is *given* (by God,) *among men whereby* (it is necessary in the Divine plan that) *we must be saved*, (from sin and death and hell.) This points them to their own Scriptures, where God's plan of salvation is revealed and Christ's name is clearly given, and to the prophecies of the Messiah which Jesus so clearly fulfilled in Himself. The inference was as Christ Himself urged it, "*Search the Scriptures*; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of Me." (John 5: 39.) It is repeatedly declared in the Scriptures that there is no salvation possible to men except by the mediation of Jesus Christ. Paul shows this in his Epistle to the Romans, that neither the highest effort of Gentile learning, nor the covenant privilege of the Jews, could procure for any man salvation. It was by Christ Jesus alone. OBSERVE.—(1) Christ is the only Saviour, for no other has been provided by God—there is none other name which is given—none in all the earth. (2) Unless we are willing to be saved on the foundation provided by God, we must be lost forever. See John 3: 16; 17: 4; 1 Cor. 3: 5; Gal. 1: 4; 2: 20; Eph. 1: 22; 5: 23; 1 Tim. 2: 6; Rom. 5: 15–18; 6: 23; 2 Cor. 9: 15. (3) The Jews hoped to be saved by the name of Abraham, whose lineal descendants they claimed to be, (John 8: 33–39,) or of Moses, in whose religion they boasted and trusted, (John 5: 45, 46,) but Abraham and Moses pointed all along to Christ. John 8: 56. (4) How important to preach the Gospel to every creature.

13. *When they saw.* That is—lit., *perceiving* from their whole manner, and especially from this outspoken profession of Jesus in the face of all opposition. ¶ *The boldness.* This term means *openness and freedom of speech*—without restraint from fear. ¶ *Unlearned*—lit., *Unlettered*. Rather—*Uneducated* (in Rabbinical knowledge.) They noticed from their mode of speech, that they were not brought up in the Rabbinical schools. They did not show the modes of thought and doctrine and speech peculiar to the Jewish doctors. The term here used does not necessarily mean *illiterate*, but without professional education. ¶ *Ignorant.* This term is not rightly translated. It means literally, *private men*, in distinction from public men—as magistrates—public teachers. It means also, men of humble station—not great, wealthy, or honored. It was evident that these men, though able to speak so freely and so well, had not received their learning in the ordinary way, and the Sanhedrim could not understand how they should know so much and speak so fluently about the law and the prophets, without any formal training in the Rabbinical schools, which, in their view, was the only way to knowledge. This, therefore, puzzled them. ¶ *They marvelled.* Instead of taking severe measures against the Apostles, they were set to wondering by Peter's remarkable discourse. And, as Meyer has said, "their wonder sharpened their recollection." ¶ *Took knowledge of them.* Rather, *they recognized them*. "In their astonishment and while their attention was the more aroused, they recollected having seen both of them in the company of Jesus." For these were the two Apostles who were present in the judgment-hall when Jesus was tried before this same Sanhedrim, (John 18: 15, 16.) It suddenly occurred to them that they had seen them *there*.

*h* ch. 3: 11.

14 And beholding the man which was healed <sup>\*</sup>standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves,

*i* J<sup>h</sup>n 11 47.

16 Saying, <sup>1</sup>What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them *is*

*m* ch. 3: 9, 10.

<sup>2</sup>manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny *it*.

17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name.

¶ *That they had been*—that they were in company with Jesus on that occasion of His trial.

14. Not only the open and bold freedom of the Apostle's discourse, but the presence of the healed cripple as a living witness for the miracle, restrained the Sanhedrim; for they could not deny the facts, and they had reason to fear the people. They had marveled in like manner at Jesus: "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned," John 7: 15. What, then, could they say or do against this demonstration? They did not pretend to deny the possibility of a miracle in the nature of things, as modern skeptics do. And they surely were the men who had every opportunity to know whether it was an imposture or not. How readily would they have so declared, if there had been even the shadow of a doubt about the reality. The cured man had probably come voluntarily to testify on their behalf. It was an admitted principle that a miracle like this was satisfactory evidence of a Divine commission. This was the highest proof they were authorized to require. OBSERVE.—It is here recorded that with all their bitter enmity and their talent at perversion, as shown in the case of our Lord, these Jewish rulers could say nothing against this miracle. Shall they, then, yield to the faith, and join themselves to the followers of the despised Nazarene? The high court of the Jewish nation is now to decide and take action upon the infant cause of Christianity. How important the result!

15, 16. These rulers confer together,

as to what they shall do. They would not have their misgivings known to the Apostles. Hence they ordered them to go out of the *council*—literally, *the Sanhedrim*. It was open, however, to others, who would report what they heard as Luke has here reported it, though Luke received his report from the Holy Spirit also. Instead of inquiring, "*What shall we do to be saved?*" they ask each other, "*What shall we do to these men?*" They could either scourge and imprison them, or forbid them to preach any further. Their chief object was to prevent their increasing influence with the people; and it would seem that already the Apostles had so far gained public confidence as that the Sanhedrim were restrained from adopting violent measures. ¶ *A notable miracle*—rather, a notorious, *well-known sign*. The term rendered *miracle* here means *sign*, and is used of a miracle as a sign, a token of the Divine presence and power. These rulers admit that here was a confessed, undisputed miracle wrought as a proof of the Divine authority. It sealed the Divine commission of those who wrought it. This confession is most strongly expressed here. That the miracle was a sign was well known—was manifest to the whole population, and that it was vain to attempt any denial of the fact. ¶ *Cannot*—lit., *We are not able to deny it*. This implies that they would have been glad to deny it against all the evidence, if they could have any hope of succeeding.

17. After these admissions were made to each other by the members of the court, they concluded upon a milder

18 <sup>a</sup> And they called them, and commanded them not <sup>n Again, ch. 5:40.</sup> to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, <sup>o ch. 5:29.</sup> Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.

20 <sup>p ch. 1:8, and 2:32. q ch. 22:15, 1 John 1:1, 2.</sup> For we cannot but speak the things which <sup>q</sup> we have seen and heard.

course as the wiser one, hoping to gain the important end of hushing up the matter. ¶ *That it spread no further, &c.* This must refer to the doctrine which the Apostles preached, as the miracle was already known throughout the city, (vs. 16.) The term here rendered “spread” is applied to the spread of a *gangrene*. See 2 Tim. 2:17. The object of the Sanhedrim was to suppress their teachings in the name of Christ. ¶ *Straitly—severely.* Literally, *Let us threaten them with a threat.* That is, according to a common Hebrew idiom, *Let us severely threaten them.* ¶ *Speak henceforth to no man.* This was the command which they would warn them, with special threats, not to disobey. They were anxious that nothing more should be spoken, in this name of Jesus, to *any man*, lest any one should be converted to that faith, and thus the doctrine should further *spread* among the people.

18. They command them most strictly *not to speak* (familiarily) *at all, nor teach*—shutting off any and all discourse that should have this name of Jesus for the subject or object. OBSERVE.—That “*only name*” given for men’s salvation, these religious rulers would utterly suppress. These were the Papists of that day.

19. This reply of the Apostles shows the strong ground which they took—that as God spake by the miracle, this court, however authorized, had no right to contradict God. It was the business of the Sanhedrim to inquire whether those speaking produced any miraculous sign of their Divine authority. And their right extended no further. They could not suppress any doctrine which God thus attested. “Even Balaam bore witness to the truth which the rulers of Israel overlooked.” (See

Numbers 3:18.) And so even a “dumb ass” had a right to speak, if commissioned by God. ¶ *Whether it be right.* The Apostle put the question to these rulers as to the right of their position; and the question turned upon this, whether the Sanhedrim were superior to God Himself. OBSERVE.—We are commanded to be subject to the powers that are in office, (Rom. 13:1,) and those who were in Moses’ seat were to be obeyed. (Matt. 23:2.) But here was a miraculous witness against the rulers, authorizing disobedience, according to a clear rule laid down in Scripture. This was the Apostle’s bold claim to private judgment and liberty of conscience, not against God’s truth, but for God’s truth as most undeniably attested. In their case there could be no doubt. They were put beyond any uncertainty as to the truth and the right. It was so clear that even the rulers, on their own professed principle of judging for God, ought to have readily yielded. OBSERVE.—The strongest and most undeniable evidence is required to warrant our disobedience to the rulers.

20. *For.* They give the sufficient reason. Literally—“*We* (emphatic,) *are not able not to speak the things which we have seen and heard.*” These Apostles had seen such clear proof of the Divinity of Jesus Christ, and had heard such direct commands to preach in His name, that they could not do otherwise than go forward. They had the firmest conviction and determination. OBSERVE.—(1) This was every way different from a fanatical zeal in publishing one’s own notions—claiming Divine authority without any Divine signs, or incontestible evidence from God’s word. (2) The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the religion of Protestants. No power of

21 So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, <sup>r</sup>because of the people: for all *men* glorified God for <sup>\*</sup>that which was done.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. 21 : 26.  
 Luke 9 : 6-19,  
 and 22 : 2.  
 ch. 5 : 36.  
 \* ch. 3 : 7, 8.

22 For the man was above forty years old, on whom this miracle of healing was shewed.

23 ¶ And being let go, <sup>\*</sup>they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them.

<sup>\*</sup> ch. 12 : 12.

Church or State has any right to bind the conscience, or compel men to a belief or subscription of any creed or confession. Yet no man has a right to exercise his faith or private judgment in a way to interfere with others, or disturb the peace of society. Nor is any one at liberty to put his private judgment in the place of God's revealed will. Yet for this he is to answer to God. No one can plead for flagrant social sins against the Decalogue that these are part of his religion—as Mormonism, or Papal oppressions—because these interfere with the rights of others and with the plain law of ten commands. Hence, we do not dispute the right of Papists or Mormons to hold their own religious views unmolested by the laws of the land; only, we oppose their system so far as it has political ends under the guise of religion, and so far as it aims to set at naught the law of God in a system of authorized iniquity. OBSERVE.—The true Christian cannot do otherwise than speak for God. And the ministers of Christ, like Paul, feel “*Wo is me, if I preach not the Gospel.*” Amos 3 : 8.

21. They added further threatenings than in vs. 18, and then they let them go free, not because they were reconciled to them, much less because they were converted to their doctrine; but because they were unable safely to take severe measures, *finding nothing how* (on what lawful ground, or on what pretense,) *they might punish them; because of the people*, (lest the populace should rise up against the rulers,) *for* (the miracle was so manifest and so well known and so glorious, that) *all (the people) glorified God for that*

*which was done*; and, therefore, would be ready to take the part of the Apostles against their persecutors. Mark 12 : 12; ch. 2 : 47. Bengel here remarks that “the people are often wiser than their rulers.”

22. The miracle was so great, and created so much sensation, because it was the cure of a man more than forty years old, who had been a cripple from his birth. Besides, the man had been well known among the people during most of this time. It is plain that the Sanhedrim themselves recognized him as one whom they had seen daily at the temple during many years. Besides, it is fair to suppose that all possible means had been resorted to during so long a period, and therefore that it was the cure of a hopeless case. Further, all human cures could at best have been only very gradual. This was immediate and by a word. ¶ *On whom this miracle of healing was shewed.* Rather, *to, or upon, whom this miracle had occurred.*

23. The Apostles, as soon as they were released, went to *their own*, (*people—company.*) that is, to the circle of the Christian brotherhood, as in ch. 21 : 23. See ch. 2 : 44, 45. The whole Christian assembly of thousands would, of course, be very deeply interested in the trial of these their leaders, and would naturally all be awaiting the report. We need not suppose that all the membership were actually together at the same time, but they were represented there. ¶ *Reported.* Though these Apostles were decided upon their own course, they wish to make known to the assembled Church all that had been said and done to them in the

24 And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, "thou *art* God," <sup>2 Kings 19:18</sup> which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is:

25 Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said,  
 \*Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain <sup>2 Ps. 2:1.</sup> things?

court, for as they all had one interest, their decision and action ought to be the same. The Sanhedrim is here called "the chief priests and elders." The Church, as an organized body, is here called *their* (the Apostles') *own*, (people.)

24. THE PRAYER OF THE CHURCH UNDER PERSECUTION. The Apostles and members doubtless looked upon this threatening as a symptom of that deep-seated opposition which the rulers would make against the Church. It was no incidental outbreak. Here was a significant and severe threat of what was to be expected, unless they would utterly and at once abandon the cause of Christ. It was the kingdom of darkness arraying itself against the kingdom of light. It is a declaration of war on the part of the powers of this world against the Church of Christ. How natural, then, that they should recur to the Second Psalm, in which this very condition of the Church is prophetically set forth. It is supposed that the whole Church sang the words of the second Psalm, and prayed, and that then Peter made an application of the Psalm to their present case, in the words here recorded. It is plain that some one led them in prayer, in which all the assembly joined. It is said, "*They lifted up their voice*"—one voice leading many hearts—"with one accord." † *Lord*.—*δεσπότα*. From this word we have the English word *despot*. It refers to absolute, uncontrolled dominion. It is applied to God, Luke 2:29; Rev. 6:10; Jude 4—and to Christ by Peter, 2 Peter 2:1. The prayer addresses Jehovah as the absolute Governor of the universe, and above all earthly rulers. The same God who made the world has

prophesied of Christ, and provided against all His enemies. **OBSERVE.**—"The Creator of the universe is He who has effected the redemption of His people, and directly presides in the government of the Church. This is a truth which lies at the foundation of Christianity, and is opposed to Sadduceism, Epicureanism and modern Pantheism."—This passage is taken from Psalm 146:6; comp. Rev. 14:7. They first ascribe to God all power and glory in all His created dominions. **OBSERVE.**—(1) The safety of the Church is not in human helpers, but in a covenant God. Nor is its peril so much from most fierce and powerful oppositions of men, as from unbelief and prayerlessness of the members. (2) The absolute sovereignty of God is our ground of hope and comfort—that He can do as He please, unhindered by Satan and his helpers—and we know that His will is "good-will to men" in the Gospel.

25. *Who by the mouth*. This refers to the second Psalm, which was admitted by all the ancient Jewish Rabbis to refer to the Messiah, ("*Kiss the Son*," &c.,) and modern German writers cannot deny the reference.—*Meyer*. *De Wette*. Here its plenary inspiration is asserted in the strongest terms—that God spake *by the mouth of David*—used David's organ of speech, and hence the words were both the words of David and the word of God. Also, the Apostle's quotation shows that the Psalm was a prophetic reference to Jesus Christ, in whom it was so remarkably fulfilled. Even if it could have had a primary reference, in part, to David, it was composed for the use of the Church in the worship of the sanctuary, and pointed forward

26 The kings of the earth stood up; and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ.

¶ Matt. 26: 3.  
Luke 22: 2, and  
23: 1-5.  
¶ Luke 1: 35.  
a Luke 4: 18.  
John 10: 36.

27 For <sup>a</sup> of a truth against <sup>a</sup> thy holy child Jesus, <sup>a</sup> whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together.

to great David's greater Son. ¶ *Why did the heathen, &c.* "In the combination of all the public authorities against Jesus, that rebellion of the world against the Lord's Anointed, which David describes, had, truly speaking, come to an outbreak." It was "*the heathen*," the Gentiles, who were not of Israel, and "*the people*" generally, including the Jews, allied for the overthrow of Christ's kingdom. "Herod and Pontius Pilate," (as Peter applies these terms,) vs. 27, the Jewish and Roman (heathen) governors, were banded together against Jesus, the Messiah. ¶ *Rage*, in a restive, refractory opposition, foaming and tearing like the fierce horse, of whom this term is elsewhere used. This the Psalmist foresees, and triumphantly wonders at, in his song, as a most impotent attempt against the Almighty. The Church of God, under the Old Testament, had seen the raging heathen—the bands of Philistines, Moabites, and Idumeans, rise up against her when David was king. But even then she was delivered. How much more now under Christ. ¶ *Imagine vain things*. Conceive or plan empty things—abortive, ineffectual designs. This Psalm is applied to Christ, (ch. 13: 33; Heb. 1: 5; 5: 5; Rev. 2: 26, 27; 12: 5; 19: 15.)

26. *The kings of the earth*. The rulers and governors, as Herod and Pilate, and now also the Sanhedrim, with all their mighty power, are accomplishing what was predicted, and thus are, on their part, proving Christ to be the Messiah. ¶ *Stood up—rose up*, in opposition. In the Hebrew original it reads—*will set themselves, or take their stand*. ¶ *Were gathered together. Assembled*. In Hebrew it reads, *sat together* in concerted hostility. The Hebrew poetry consists commonly of

parallel lines, in which very much the same sentiment is repeated in different terms. So here the main idea is the same in both clauses of the verse. ¶ *Against the Lord*. Hebrew, *Against Jehovah*. Christ is "*Jehovah*" as the covenant God, revealing Himself in His Church. ¶ *His Christ*. Hebrew, *His Messiah*. The term "*Messiah*," in Hebrew, means *anointed one*; and this is also the meaning of the term Christ, in Greek, which is the corresponding title. This is one of the few passages in the Old Testament, in which the term Messiah, or Anointed One, is directly applied to Him of whom all anointed ones—king, priest, or prophet, and even Cyrus, (who is so called,)—were types, Isa. 45: 1. It is here implied that opposition to Christ is opposition to Jehovah. This was a confounding argument against the Jews, for they professed and boasted that they worshiped the true Jehovah. Christ, therefore, and the Apostles, always aim to show them how directly they assault the God of their fathers, and bring down His wrath upon them, John 5: 23; 12: 44, 45.

27. *For*. Here the Apostles and assembly, (Peter leading the rest,) apply the Psalm to the events then taking place around them. They do not mean that this is a full accomplishment of the Psalm, such as it was and is, more and more to have; but that it is herein fulfilled "*of a truth*"—really—certainly. ¶ *Thy Holy Child Jesus*. Rather, *Against thy consecrated Servant Jesus*. See Notes, 3: 13. The use of this term—not the usual one for Son, but the term answering to "*the Servant of Jehovah*," in Isaiah, is expressive, (Isa. 42: 1; 52: 13; so Zech. 3: 8.) See vs. 25. He was the one to whom the prophets looked forward, and He is "*the Son*" to whom this Psalm refers

28 <sup>b</sup>For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel <sup>5 ch. 2: 23, and 3: 18,</sup> determined before to be done.

29 And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and <sup>c vs. 13: 31. ch. 9: 27, and 13: 46, and 14: 3 and 19: 8, and 26: 26, & 28: 31. Eph. 6: 19.</sup> grant unto thy servants, <sup>d ch. 2: 43, and 5: 12,</sup> that with all boldness they may speak thy word,

30 By stretching forth thine hand to heal; <sup>d</sup> and that

as the One to whom cordial homage is due. "*Kiss the Son.*" It is Jesus as the official Mediator, who is here meant in the sense in which this Psalm speaks of Him. "Thou art *my Son*, this day have I begotten thee," (Heb. 1: 5; 5: 5.) "*My King*, upon my holy hill of Zion." Jesus was "holy," not only in Himself, without spot, but as *set apart, appointed, consecrated* to His office work as Mediator. Hence it is added, "*whom thou hast anointed*"—inducted as King, (Luke 4: 18.) ¶ *Both Herod*, (Luke 23: 1–12,) "*and Pontius Pilate*," though they had been at enmity with each other, "made friends," so as to join in putting Jesus to shame and death, (Luke 23: 12.) And not only these rulers, representing Jewish and Gentile nations, but these united "*with the Gentiles*" themselves, (Romans, &c.,) "*and the people* (tribes,) *of Israel*,"—were all collected to do whatever God had purposed without any knowledge of theirs.

28. *For to do.* The Church here join in their ascription of praise to God, that when these rulers and people did, and should do their utmost, they could only do what God Himself had already included in His plan from all eternity. Hence it is triumphantly asked, *why* do they so vainly rage and plan, when it must all end only in furthering the plans of Him whom they oppose—by His making their wrath to praise Him, and restraining the remainder. See ch. 2: 23; 3: 18. OBSERVE.—These enemies did not meet for the object or with the design of fulfilling God's purposes, but God overruled their doings to accomplish His own plan. Men none the less do their worst. But how idle and vain their hostility, when it turns out that what they have done, God not only provides against, but predetermined and pro-

vided for beforehand. ¶ *Thy hand* "Luke uses the term 'hand' as well as 'counsel' the more plainly to declare that the events of things are not only governed by the counsel of God, but that they are ordered also by His power and hand."—*Calvin*. See Isa. 10: 5–7, the case of Sennacherib. ¶ *Determined before*. Literally, *preordained*. OBSERVE.—Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but to them that are saved, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the *wisdom* of God and the *power* of God unto salvation, (1 Cor. 1: 24.)

29. *Lord*. This title is elsewhere, without exception, in the Acts used of *Christ*. Here the address is to God the Father all along—as anointing the Son, &c., (vs. 27,) though here it may be a turn in the address, (to Christ.) ¶ *Behold*. This seems to keep up the reference to the Psalm, where it is said that "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." *Look* (with derision,) upon their threatenings, thou who wilt break them in pieces as a potter's vessel. ¶ *And grant*. They do not pray for the destruction of their enemies, but rather always for that triumph which these Apostles achieved by open, bold speech, and by Divine gifts of healing. They pray only for what their Great High Priest had asked for them in His intercessory prayer, (John 17: 15.) ¶ *All boldness—entire freedom of speech*. This they wanted for a free and full deliverance of the Gospel message, rather than for their own personal release. This, accordingly, was granted them as the substance of their prayer, (vs. 31,) namely, that all, not only the Apostles, spake the Word of God with unrestrained boldness.

30. *By stretching forth*. Rather, "*In thy stretching forth thy hand for healing,*"



ch. 3: 6, 16.  
vs. 27.

signs and wonders may be done \*by the name of 'thy holy child Jesus.

ch. 2: 1, 4, and  
16: 26,  
4 vs. 29.

31 ¶ And when they had prayed, \* the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, <sup>a</sup> and they spake the word of God with boldness.

ch. 5: 12.  
Rom. 15: 5, 6.  
2 Cor. 13: 11.  
Phil. 1: 27, and  
2: 2.  
1 Pet. 3: 8.

32 And the multitude of them that believed <sup>1</sup>were of

&c. God's work of healing and other miraculous works through them, would embolden them to speak the Word, as in this case. This would furnish them the Divine attestation in the face of their enemies. All they asked for was the Divine *signature* to their work. They did not plead for safety, but for this glory to the name of Jesus to accompany their work. ¶ *And that signs and wonders* (see ch. 2: 43, note,) *may be done*, (rather, may come to pass,) *in the name of this consecrated Servant Jesus*. See vs. 27, where the same terms are used as here for the designation of Christ. They prayed that He against whom the princes of this world had taken such a stand and would continue to do so, might have His name honored by the working of signs and wonders by means of His name, as in this case, only more abundantly. (ch. 3: 16,) by that name which they were forbidden to speak.

31. RESULT OF THE PRAYER.—Immediately, and as a manifest answer to their prayer, the place where they were assembled *was shaken*. This was a token of God's mighty power responding to their cry. He who will shake the nations, and once more shake not the earth only, but also heaven, shook that place of prayer. The term denotes a *violent* shaking, as of a tempest or an earthquake. As there was no natural cause for it, it was a miraculous token to them of the Divine presence and protection. It was a testimony to them to assure their confidence by a visible sign—not the same as at Pentecost, for that was significant of the peculiar occasion. Then it was rather a noise, and now a motion. Then it was the gift of tongues: now the gift of free and well-certified preaching, (ch. 16: 25, 26.) See Ps.

29: 8; Isa. 2: 19-21; 13: 13; Ezek. 38: 19; Joel 3: 16; Haggai 2: 6, 7. ¶ *All filled with the Holy Ghost*. This effusion of the Spirit produced the same effect as at Pentecost—"they were all filled with the Holy Ghost," and though not now "*speaking with other tongues*," yet with freer tongues and new confidence, and endowed with miraculous gifts of healing, (signs and wonders,) for confirming the truth. As an immediate result and an express answer to the prayer, it is here recorded that "they spake the Word of God with boldness," as they had begged to do. See ch. 5: 3, 4, 12, 16, 21, 29-33, 42. The next chapter is indeed a wonderful record of what they were enabled to do in direct answer to this prayer. OBSERVE.—(1) All Christians, as well as ordained ministers, ought to speak of Christ with freedom. (2) Prayer is answered just as directly when offered by the humblest believer, as when offered by this Apostolic Church, because the promise is for the sake of Christ, to glorify the name of Christ.

32. THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH. ¶ *The multitude*. This may refer, as some think, to the recent converts under this last discourse of Peter, in which case it would simply state that they were of the same character as the former Disciples, described in ch. 2: 42-47. Or, it may be a repeated statement now in regard to the whole membership, in the light of these threatening circumstances. In the face of all this positive interdict of the rulers against any preaching of Christ, what will they do about their worldly goods and means of living? Are they all preparing for the coming storm by hoarding up all they have? Or, are all scattering and shifting each for himself in terror of the evil day, and in fear of

one heart and of one soul: \*neither said any of them that <sup>h ch. 2:44.</sup> ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

33 And with <sup>l ch. 1:8.</sup> great power gave the apostles <sup>m ch. 1:22.</sup> witness

being stripped of their all? The membership was already five thousand before this last discourse. Doubtless many more had been added. Yet this *multitude* was one—in heart and soul—as Jesus had prayed they might be. John 17: 21. Attention is thus called to the fact that *they were a perfectly harmonious and united Church up to this time, though soon to be disturbed by internal defection*, ch. 5: 1-5. OBSERVE.—“God comforts His persecuted pastors by the increase of their flock, and He confirms the flock by the constancy of their pastors.” ¶ *Of one heart and one soul*—“both in creed and in conduct one. Wonderful character of the Church.”—*Bengel*. How different the present state of the Church: yet the Great High Priest prays for its *oneness*, and it shall yet be gloriously one, again. ¶ *Neither said*. Literally, *Not even one* (in so great a multitude,) *said*—*reckoned and claimed*. This was the highest degree of concord. ¶ *That ought*. Literally, *that any thing of the goods belonging to him were his own*—for his private exclusive use. It is clear, (1) That some of these Church members had property. (2) That they did not hold it solely for their own selfish use, but for the benefit also of those that had need, (vs. 35.) OBSERVE.—The CHARITY of this Apostolic Church was a cherished rule of living—not an impulse, nor an act of charity now and then—but a habit, a principle, a *life of love*. They did not aim at hoarding riches, but at dispensing their means to make others comfortable. The poor contributed what they could, of service and of love and of prayer, to the common cause, and to each other. And the rich contributed of what they had to *give*, not only love and prayer and service, but money also; and this not as a piece of patronage, but as a free offering to brethren in Christ. They held these means that were intrusted to

them as not exclusively their own, but as the Lord's; and themselves as His stewards for their proper distribution. See Notes, ch. 2: 44. ¶ *All things common*. Not in common *possession*, but in common *use*. Plainly the property belonged to some and not to others. This providential inequality gave room for the exercise of such a precious Christian grace, as it cannot be exercised in heaven. The charm of it was in the light in which they regarded their property—not contending about the “mine” and “thine”—not oppressing a poor brother—not aiming at laying up treasures and acquiring riches to hoard; but holding all that they had at the demand of each other's necessity, and on the principle that the goods belonged to those who had need, just so far as God had cast the needy brethren upon their care and resources. And so this mutual aid was cheerfully and universally carried on. OBSERVE.—(1) The religion of Christ, as here set forth, is the most perfect system of mutual aid which the world has ever seen. (2) The Church is the Institution above all others, appointed by God to universal beneficence—“to do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.” (3) Christians are just as much required to be charitable and liberal in their contributions, as they are bound to be honest and true. An avaricious, grasping Christian is as much a contradiction in terms as a lying or stealing Christian. (5) The Church ought to inquire into the beneficence of its members as strictly as into their fidelity and duty in any other respect. (6) True piety, after the example of Christ and His true members, will prompt to open hearted liberality, the world over. True Christian love will do more than new societies and new regulations. System is needed.

33. Besides the unity and liberal communication of the members, (a great

**act. 1:47.** of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and <sup>a</sup>great grace was upon them all.

**act. 2:45.** 34 Neither was there any among them that lacked: <sup>o</sup>for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,

power in the Church,) the Apostles were powerful, also, in their public and open testimony of the Resurrection. Besides that freedom of speaking the word which all the membership shared, (vs. 31,) though not all in public preaching, the Apostles, who were raised up to be eye-witnesses and testifiers of Christ's Resurrection, were blessed with unusual power, ch. 1:22. They received special gifts for publishing, vindicating, explaining, confirming, arguing and enforcing the great facts of which they bore witness. The term rendered "*power*" is that often used for "*miracle*," and refers to their miraculous gifts with others, as contributing to make their preaching powerful, through God. ¶ *Great grace.* This is Divine grace, which wrought in them this graciousness of living, and produced toward them the *grace* or favor of the people, which it is said in a similar connection that they enjoyed, ch. 2:47. And this was a further mark of the Divine favor toward the Church at this first persecution. ¶ *Them all.* All the members of the Church. **OBSERVE.**—The Jews were noted for a want of liberality, so that Julian said, "No one begs of the Jews, while the Galileans nurture the disabled both of their own and of others." So also it is recorded that the Jewish populace remarked this peculiarity of the Christians as afterwards the Gentiles did, when they exclaimed, "See how these Christians love one another."

34. *Neither.* Rather, *For* there was not any, &c. This is given as an effect of the Divine grace, and as ground, also, of the public favor. ¶ *That lacked.* This describes the condition of the membership growing out of the habit of liberal distribution to meet each other's necessities. Thus it was fulfilled as God had promised—that there should not be a destitute man among

them, Deut. 15:4, and this is recorded therefore as a sign of God's exceeding grace upon all the members. ¶ *As many, &c.* This was not compulsory, nor did every one owning property at once sell all that he had for the common good; much less was all thrown into a common stock or fund, for the whole membership to share equally. This was done so far and on such occasions only as there was need, vs. 35. But the needs of giver and receiver were consulted. From the case of Ananias and Sapphira, we see that it was by no law of the Church, and that there was no compulsion. In ch. 12:12, we find an example of a house in possession. Hence it is recorded in one eminent instance, (vss. 36, 37,) as a specimen case. And a false view of the matter leading to a *show* of the same liberality, only in a feigned way, a mimicking of the true, is set forth in the next chapter. *Bengel* says, we ought to have the same free distribution of our means at this day, without community of goods. ¶ *Possessors of lands.* Some suppose that all who owned lands or houses sold their estate and put the money to this use. Yet they were under no law of the Church to do so. *Bengel* suggests that by selling their real estate before the destruction of the city, the Christians obtained money of the Jews, as the Israelites did of the Egyptians. There was also in this act a meaning that they sought a better country; and were ready to sell out their fast property so as to have their means at command for active Christian charity. 2 Cor. 8:9. **OBSERVE.**—(1) Giving all one's goods to feed the poor is not of itself a proof of true piety. There must be true Christian love to God and man, actuating it, and not any false pretense like that of Ananias, 1 Cor. 15:3. (2) This conduct shows that they were not looking for the temporal

35 <sup>r vs. 37.</sup> And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: <sup>ch. 5:2.</sup> and <sup>g ch. 2:45. and</sup> distribution was made unto every man according as he <sup>6:1.</sup> had need.

36 And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus,

37 <sup>r vs. 34, 35.</sup> Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money and <sup>ch. 5:1, 2.</sup> laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

reign of Christ at Jerusalem, however they may have looked for His coming.

35. *At the Apostles' feet.* Thus, offerings were laid at the footstools of kings in the east, and of Roman prætors. Here it was in token of acknowledgment that the cause which the Apostles officially represented has a claim to all we have and are. ¶ *Distribution was made.* Literally, *It was distributed*, or they distributed it. The tense expresses the idea that this practice was common and habitual among them. ¶ *According as he had need.* Rather, *any one.* The idea of contingency is included, *as any one had at any time (or in any respect might have) need.*

36. A special instance is here given. It was the case of a *Levite*, who, according to the Jewish dispensation, was by descent a minister of the sanctuary. To the Levites it was provided that they should hold no landed property as others: and God had promised to be their sufficient portion. There was a deep meaning in that ancient law. And now, in the true spirit of his Levitical rank, moved by the Holy Ghost and not by the dead formality, he would be a *Levite indeed*. Numbers 18: 10; Deut. 10: 3. ¶ *Barnabas.* This surname was significant, and was given him by the Apostles to indicate his particular excellence or gift. It means the "son of prophecy," or "son of inspired eloquence." The Greek interpretation here given is "son of consolation"—lit., of *paracletism*—in the double sense, however, of the term *Paraclete*—an advocate and comforter, (John 14: 16.) Happy are the Gospel ministers who, besides speaking comfort to the poor, can also dispense it from their means; but few

of them have land or houses to sell, or silver and gold to give. This Barnabas is the same whose sister had a house in Jerusalem where the Church was entertained, (ch. 12: 12.) Her son, John Mark, was the companion of Paul and of Barnabas his uncle, in their first missionary journey, on which they were sent forth by the Church at Antioch. For the history of Barnabas, see ch. 9: 26, 27; 11: 22-30; 12: 25; 13: 1, 2, 50; 14: 12; 15: 12; 1 Cor. 9: 6; Gal. 2: 1, 9. ¶ *A Levite.* A descendant of Levi, whose business it was to attend upon the priests, music, &c., in the service of the sanctuary. The whole tribe of Levi was devoted to the service of religion. They were divided into two classes, priests and Levites. The priests were such only as were descended from Aaron, who was descended from Levi's son, *Kohath*. The Levites were such as sprang from Gershon and Merari, the two other sons of Levi, Numbers 3. Deut. 12: 18, 19; 18: 6-8; 1 Chron. 23, 24. ¶ *Of Cyprus*—lit., *a Cyprian by birth.* This is the largest island in the Mediterranean except Sicily, and is near to Syria. This was the scene of the first labors of Paul and Barnabas, when they went out as the first missionaries of the Church at Antioch. See ch. 13: 4; 15: 39. Both these distinguished propagators of Christianity were born out of Judea in heathen countries, and belonged to the class of Hellenists—Jews speaking Greek—and thus, by their foreign connections, were specially fitted to give the Gospel to the heathen. The Jews had settled extensively in Cyprus.

37. *Having land.* Though the Le-

vites, as a tribe, had no inheritance in Israel, on the ground of God's claiming to be their special inheritance, yet they had cities and lands assigned to them, Deut. 35 : 1-5, and it would seem that individuals of them could acquire and sell landed property in and around their forty-eight cities, Numbers 35 : 1-8; Leviticus 25 : 32; Deut. 18 : 8; Jer. 1 : 1; 32 : 6-9, though, as *Bengel* suggests, it was probably only outside of the Holy Land that they could hold any estate. "*Land*" here means an estate or farm. And it was in the *spirit* of the law that they should not have an earthly estate, like other classes of men. His land was probably in Cyprus, where he belonged. Some suppose that Barnabas set the example of this practice. ¶ *The money.* The price for which the land was sold. ¶ *Laid it at the Apostles' feet.* This he did in the spirit of a true Levite—a true servant of the sanctuary. This he did in connection with speaking the word with boldness: a true "son of consolation," and worthy of the name, which possibly he derived from this transaction. Viewed in connection with the missionary career of this man, it shows his deep and cordial devotedness. He gave up his worldly interests, and applied himself to the work of the Gospel. He was not an Apostle, though he is once so called, but in the sense of a messenger or Apostolic missionary. **OBSERVE.**—(1) Every Church member is just as much bound to give up all for Christ, as any minister is. (2) Members of the Church, who have the qualifications and means, ought to devote themselves and their property to the great work of evangelizing the world. (3) Until those Church members who have lands and houses, will give them up to the cause of Christ as the work requires, there will be no adequate progress made in the extension of the Saviour's kingdom. The Church needs such "sons of consolation." "If ye know these things, (such as the washing of the Disciples' feet,) happy are ye if ye do them," John 13 : 17. "All

things are as nothing to him to whom God is all in all."—*Quesnel*. (4) "We are, by this example, reminded that while the authorities in Israel had leagued themselves together with the raging heathen against the Anointed of Jehovah, the Church of Christ had through God's miraculous protecting and fostering grace, exhibited a state of things corresponding to that original model of the people of Israel which the word of God has sketched."

#### CHAPTER V.

§ 8. THE FIRST DEFECTION—(*Ananias and Sapphira*.) Ch. 5 : 1-16. *Jerusalem*. A. D. 30-36.

The troubles of the rising Church are not merely from without. They spring up even more seriously from within. This has been the case in all its history. It arises from "the form of godliness without the power thereof." We see here that a profession that is empty already disturbs the peace of Zion, and calls for the discipline of Christ's house.

The "*fellowship*" of the believers, (ch. 2 : 44,) in which "they continued steadfastly," seems to be enumerated among the ordinances as an act of worship. As a religious rite, it appears as a confession of the second table of the law: love to our neighbor as ourselves. The practical expression of this was the community of goods, in the sense already set forth, (ch. 2 : 44; 4 : 34-37.) This religious devotement of property to the wants of the suffering membership being an act of worship, they who falsely professed to perform this, are said to have "*lied unto the Holy Ghost*." Thus it occurred with the ancient Israel when, passing through her first struggle with the Canaanites, (Josh. 7 : 24,) *ACHAN*, one out of the very midst of Israel, sinned in stealing the wedge of gold. In that case, also, the Church suffered, and severest measures were called for, to purge the membership. Here arises the New Testament *ACHAN*.

## CHAPTER V.

1 BUT a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back part of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. a ch. 4:37.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart || to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? b Num. 30:2  
Deut. 23:21.  
Eccles. 5:4.  
c Luke 22:3.  
|| Or, to deceive.  
vs. 9.

1. *But.*—Now the historian turns to the dark side of the picture in the History of the Early Church. ¶ *Ananias.* This name, quite common among the Jews, means “the grace of the Lord.” *Sapphira* means “Beautiful.” Yet all this is in the name, as Bengel suggests, while the habits are evil. It is twice mentioned that he did it “with Sapphira his wife,” to show that it was the result of previous concert. ¶ *Sold a possession.* From vs. 3, we infer that this possession was a field—a farm—landed property, as in the case of Barnabas.

2. *Kept back part.* This term means, *Secretly separated for his own use.* The same term is used in the Septuagint respecting Achan's sin, (Josh. 7:1.) In Titus 2:10, it is rendered *purlaining*. The nature of the sin is plainly signified here. They professed to devote the whole proceeds of the land, and brought forward a part, professing it to be the whole—keeping back a part for private use; not avowedly, but fraudulently. Professing to separate it all to God, they separated a part to themselves secretly. ¶ *His wife also being privy, &c.* They sinned all the more grievously, as they could and should have dissuaded each other from the sin.—*Bengel.* ¶ *Brought a certain part.* No matter how large a part, since they professed that it was the whole, and it was not. ¶ *Laid it at the Apostles' feet.* This was done in a solemn, formal act of devotion. It was probably done in public assembly, at the time of public worship, before the face of the congregation, and at the feet of the Apostles, who acted in the name and authority of

Jesus Christ. These are the features of the act which made it so aggravated an offense against God and the Church, and which called for the severest punishment.

3. In the case of Achan, death was visited by the word of God and the hand of man. “Here it is by the word of the Apostle, and the hand of God.”—*Bengel.* ¶ *Why—Alas! that Satan, &c.* This grievous sin is ascribed to the Old Deceiver of our first parents, who always has been on the alert to oppose the rising cause of God in the earth. The kingdom of darkness here takes a stand against the advancing kingdom of light. So in the case of Judas, the crime was traced to Satan's *filling the heart*, (Luke 22:3; John 13:27.) This implies a thorough hardening of the conscience—a filling full of the spirit of evil, as contrary to that Holy Spirit who fills the heart of believers. Satan is here referred to as a personal agent, the antagonist of the Holy Ghost. He is said also to have entered into Judas, (John 13:27.) ¶ *To lie unto the Holy Ghost.* At the very time that this pair of hypocrites pretend to be full of the Holy Ghost, they are found to be full of Satan, and lying unto the Holy Ghost. This was the object of Satan, thus to deceive the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity; and in these false professors, this was the nature of the attempt as far as in them lay. It is called *a lie unto the Holy Ghost*, because it was a solemn counterfeiting, before the Church, of a special, spiritual grace, and the profaning of a holy ordinance. The aim of it was to palm

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

off the work of Satan as the work of the Spirit of God, and to defy the Holy Spirit as dwelling in the Apostles and the Church. Had it succeeded, it would have gone so far to wipe out all distinctions between the works of the flesh and of the Spirit, and to destroy the very foundations of Christ's house, as the "*habitation of God through the Spirit.*" OBSERVE.—The Holy Ghost is here shown to be a Person of the Godhead distinct from the Father and the Son. "The sin against the Holy Ghost" is elsewhere spoken of as so peculiarly aggravated as to be unpardonable, (Matt. 12: 31, 32; Mark 3: 28, 29,) while all sin against the Son of man may find pardon. That the Holy Ghost is a *Person*, and not a mere *influence*, is plain from the language, He is "*lied unto*," which could not be said of an influence; and in vs. 4 this is said to be *lying unto God*. Hence we infer that the Holy Ghost is God. This is elsewhere clearly revealed in the Scripture, (Matt. 28: 19; Luke 2: 26; 2 Cor. 13: 14.) See also ch. 1: 16; 5: 3, 9; 28: 25; Heb. 9: 14; 1 Cor. 2: 10; Luke 1: 35; Rev. 2: 23. ¶ *And to keep back*. This was the way in which the lie was acted out. OBSERVE.—Peter knows surely of the hypocrisy of these persons, as he could not know except by Divine power enabling him to discern the spirits. OBSERVE.—The sin was like that of Judas pretending to care for the poor, (John 12: 6,) but *falsely*.

4. From this it is clear that the offering of their property was voluntary, and hence that this was a willful attempt at deception. The land was their own, while it remained undevoted to this sacred purpose: but by that act of special consecration it was made "*holy to the Lord*,"—separated to His service—and then it became *sacrilege* to separate any part of it stealthily to themselves. Lev. 27: 28. And even when the land was sold, the proceeds

were in their *own power* to use them as they pleased. There was no law compelling them to dispose of the property in this way: and until the vow was made devoting it to God, they could have kept it entirely, except so far as they were bound by the great law of charity. OBSERVE.—The great duties of religion are binding upon us whether we profess it or not. Here was a case where a special vow made a special obligation to do according to the thing avowed. But none can excuse themselves for not professing the religion of Christ by the plea that it is better not to profess than to profess and not perform. For, (1) It is not left to their choice to profess Christ or not. This is their solemn duty. (2) While they pretend to have fear of making a false profession, they should fear also the dreadful sin of making no profession of Christ. ¶ *Conceived*. Literally, *Put in thine heart*. The sin which was put in their heart by Satan, was also put in their heart by themselves. Ananias is charged with putting it there, and it would seem that he suggested it to his wife: contrary to the case of our first parents in the garden. OBSERVE.—The suggestion of Satan does not become sin in us unless it is entertained by us. Evil thoughts may be put into the mind by the tempter. It is only when they are harbored and indulged that they become ours. ¶ *Unto men*—not so much as unto God. The *lying to men*, of which he was guilty, was not the special nature of the crime, as he might have thought, but *lying unto God*. The peculiar enormity of his guilt was this, that he had probably very much overlooked, or disregarded.—How careful men are to provide against human detection, and careless about the searching eye of God. Ps. 41: 4. ¶ *Unto God*. Compare John 3: 6 with 1 John 5: 4. Matt. 9: 38 with Acts 13: 4-24. 2 Tim. 3: 16 with 2 Peter 1: 21. John 6: 45 with 1 Cor. 2: 13. 1 Cor. 8: 10

5 And Ananias hearing these words <sup>4</sup>fell down, and <sup>5</sup>vs. 10 11 gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

6 And the young men arose, <sup>6</sup>wound him up, and <sup>7</sup>John 19:40. carried him out, and buried him.

with 1 Cor. 6 : 19, and we find that the Deity and Personality of the Holy Ghost are plainly taught. To "*lie unto*," here expresses the opposition or hostility intended by the act. OBSERVE.—(1) "Ananias has lied to God the Spirit, not to men and Peter. Dare, if you can, O Socinian, thus to read it, 'He has lied, not to the Spirit and Peter, but to God.'"—*Bengel*. The Holy Ghost so far from being less than God, is He against whom the sin (against the Holy Ghost,) is more heinous than against the Father or the Son. (Matt. 12 : 31.) (2) The judgment is the same as was pronounced against Judas—who also concealed his love of money under a hypocritical regard for the poor.

5. Peter in those words pronounced his inspired verdict against the hypocrite. Some have found nothing miraculous in the effect of this upon Ananias, but only the working of his delicate sensibility—the severe and sudden shock of such a terrible detection before the whole Church, where he had thought to succeed in his deception, and to obtain nothing but praise for such large liberality. But here was plainly the visitation of God—the hand of Divine judgment, and thus it was in both cases the same. OBSERVE.—(1) Many who carry the public applause for large gifts, do yet not give according to their large means, in any proper proportion, but after all, *keep back part of the price*. God alone can search the heart. But His judgment day will reveal the true character of our deeds. (2) How awful will be the terror with which sinners will be struck at the final judgment, when Christ Himself shall pronounce the sentence, *Depart*. (3) How fearful is the sentence of the sinner's own conscience. "Every mouth shall be stopped, and the whole world shall become guilty before God." ¶ *Gave up*

*the ghost*. Literally, *expired*. It would be possible for one to be so shocked and overwhelmed by sudden detection as to fall down dead. But the fact that both the man and his wife drop down so instantly would imply that this was by the direct act of God. This we can see would make a fearful example of these persons, and tend thus to deter others from similar hypocrisy in the Church. ¶ *Great fear*. The immediate effect upon the whole community was this of great fear. The judicial infliction had this desired effect of striking terror into the mind of the entire people. It was not only the sudden death of this unhappy couple, but the awful power accompanying the Apostles, which would naturally excite great and universal fear: so that it is repeated in vs. 11. This reverential fear would go far to prevent the intrusion of false brethren into the Church.

6. *The young men*. This may refer to a class in the congregation accustomed to do the work of preparing the room and attending upon the services. On the general plan of the synagogue there were such, called *servants*, Luke 4 : 20. These would naturally be the *younger* men, as those of some important office would naturally be *elders*. They are also called *νεανίσκοι*, *youths*, (vs. 10,) and without being a class of ecclesiastics, they were probably the younger members of the congregation acting in accordance with the Jewish custom, or perhaps now at some special direction. Incidental services like these were necessary, and without any formal erection of an office these duties, as of sexton, doorkeeper, &c., came to be performed by the young men. ¶ *Wound him up*. Wrapped him up in some loose covering. The Jews commonly bound the limbs separately with many folds of linen, in order to embalm the body. Often, however,



7 And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what was done, came in.

8 And Peter answered unto her, Tell me whether ye sold the land for so much? And she said, Yea, for so much.

9 Then Peter said unto her, How is it that ye have agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? behold, the feet of them which have buried thy husband *are* at the door, and shall carry thee out.

a loose shroud was thrown around the fresh corpse; which was done in this case, probably, on account of the great haste. Some think that they wound him up in their own mantles, which they took off preparatory to carrying him out.—(*Hackett*.) Others, that they wrapped him hastily in his own loose cloak or robe.—(*Lightfoot*.) ¶ *Carried him out*—lit., *Having carried him forth*—they buried him. Out of the house and out of the city. The Jews were accustomed to bury their dead outside the city walls. And this was done on the day of the death—partly because of the rapid putrefaction of the body in that warm climate, and partly because of the defilement which they suffered from contact with a dead body, Numbers 19 : 11. The burial, in this case, may have been hastened by the extraordinary circumstances of the death. This was more in accordance with the Divine visitation. Those who have suffered capital punishment for crime, whether by the law or directly by the hand of God, have always been regarded as entitled to no consideration after death, and so their remains have been treated with contempt. OBSERVE.—The crime of this man, as a false professor and deceiver in the Christian Church, was deeply aggravated, and his punishment was merited.

7. *Three hours after*—lit., *It came to pass at an interval of about three hours*. The woman, as the weaker vessel, had a longer space for repentance. “Precious three hours.”—*Bengel*. This may indicate that the Christians observed the Jewish hours of prayer, ch. 3 : 1; 10 : 3. The corpse had not been carried to the house, but buried

at once, so that his wife did not know what was done during that three hours’ time. ¶ *Came in*. That is, to the congregation where they were assembled for worship. It was so ordered in providence that this wicked pair should be separately tried and punished.

8. *Peter answered*. This may mean, addressed her, or replied to her address or salutation on her entrance. ¶ *For so much*. He asks whether they two sold the land for the sum stated by Ananias, perhaps also pointing to it at his feet. ¶ *Yea*. She protested and insisted upon it, that this was the real and exact sum. She intended to deceive, and this was the essence of the lie. Even though they received this amount and more, she told a deliberate falsehood, because it was her purpose to deceive the Apostles with the idea that this was the full amount.

9. *Ye have agreed*. Lit., *That it has been agreed by you*. The term expresses open agreement in terms, with previous concert. It is used in classic writers to signify *conspiracy*. ¶ *Tempt the Spirit of the Lord*. That is, to put to the test the Spirit of God, by lying to the Holy Ghost, and attempting to palm off hypocrisy for piety, as though He could not detect the difference, or as though He were alike the Author of both. ¶ *At the door*. Near at hand, returning from the burial. See Mark 13 : 29, “nigh even at the doors.” This was three hours after the death of Ananias, and this length of time would be necessary to carry the corpse some distance outside of the city, and to dig the grave, and finish the burial, and return. ¶ *Carry thee out*. As Peter knew beforehand that she was

10 \*Then fell she down straightway at his feet, and yielded up the ghost: and the young men came in, and found her dead, and, carrying *her* forth, buried *her* by her husband.

11 <sup>a</sup> And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things.

12 ¶ And <sup>i</sup> by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (<sup>k</sup> and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13 And <sup>l</sup> of the rest durst no man join himself to them: <sup>m</sup> but the people magnified them.

to die also, on the spot, for her crime, it is plain that it was by the special visitation of God, as a judicial infliction. (See vs. 5, Notes.)

10. *Yielded up the ghost.* This is expressed in the Greek by one word, which means simply *expiring*, and is a better rendering. It is plain that the historian here understands this death as supernatural. It was not only instantaneous like the former, but it was precisely as Peter foretold. ¶ *Came in*, &c. Lit., *When they came in, found her dead.* ¶ *By her husband.* In the same grave with her husband.

11. *Great fear.* The same is recorded (vs. 5,) in the case of Ananias. Of course, there was now additional reason for this public sensation, as the Divine judgment was repeated. It was intended not only to visit just punishment upon the offenders, but also to express God's special hatred of hypocrisy in His Church. See Matt. 23. An example was made of these, at this early stage of the Church's history, that should stand as a permanent warning against false profession and willful deception in Christ's house. So Cain, the first murderer, was signally punished by God. So Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire instead of the true. Korah and his company, for setting themselves against Moses—and Uzziah, for profanely laying hands upon the staggering ark, were judicially destroyed by God. Achan, for his corresponding crime in the first period of Israel's history, needed to be promptly thrust out by the Church, and was put to death. **OBSERVE.—**

11\*

Even the persecuting Sanhedrim were awed, in some measure, by these wondrous and fearful judgments of God, so swiftly visiting death upon the sinner.

12. Not only were there these awful demonstrations in the Church, that made it seem as the sacred fire of the altar which broke forth and consumed everything impure, (Levit. 10: 1-10,) there were also other manifestations of power in their miraculous gifts, which were now greatly increased. If the former would keep some *such insincere ones* standing aloof for dread, the latter would lead many to believe. ¶ *Signs and wonders.* See ch. 2: 43. ¶ *Among the people*—who are said, in vs. 13, to have *magnified them*—that is, the whole Church. Some read this clause as connecting immediately with vs. 15, and that what comes between is to be read as a parenthesis. But this is not necessary. It is plain that these verses aim to give us an account of the Church's progress after the astonishing events just recorded. ¶ *All.* The Apostles and the Disciples—as a Church. ¶ *With one accord.* In religious assemblage at the times of public worship. See *Notes*, John 10: 23. They were wont to assemble now as a separate body, in Solomon's Porch; the "upper chamber" (1: 13,) having become too small for them.

13. *And of the rest.* The general idea here is that this reverential awe kept back the promiscuous multitude—"the people"—"those that are without"—from intruding themselves upon the membership as false Disciples, and

<sup>a</sup> vs. 5.  
ch. 2: 43, and  
19: 17.  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 2: 43, and  
14: 3, and 19: 11.  
Rom. 1: 19.  
<sup>k</sup> 2 Cor. 12: 12.  
Heb. 2: 4.  
<sup>l</sup> ch. 3: 11, and  
4: 32.  
<sup>m</sup> John 9: 22, and  
12: 42, & 19: 38.  
vs. ch. 2: 47, and  
4: 21.

14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women ;)

¶ Or, *in every street.*  
n. Matt. 9: 21,  
and 14: 35,  
ca. 19: 12.

15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick || into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, \* that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by, might overshadow some of them.

especially that none who were like Ananias and Sapphira, deceivers and hypocrites, dared to mingle in their assemblies, much less to join themselves to the Christian Church, as that false-hearted couple had done. Only true believers were more largely added to the Church, (vs. 15.) This was the desired effect of such signal judgment of God. There were doubtless many more who were just as insincere as they were, and who stood ready to join themselves to the Church just as lightly and as falsely as *they* had done. But of the remainder of this class, in whom it would indeed have been an act of *daring*, none of them *dared* to join himself to them, fearing the consequences now as they naturally must do after so awful a visitation of God's wrath. ¶ *But the people.* The common people of the Jews regarded the company of believers with respect and admiration, and paid them honor. The Christian cause was thus making progress in the community. See ch. 4: 21. The people generally were so far satisfied that this work was of God. Hence the fear that was aroused in some minds did not drive the people away in dread of any connection with the Church. It only infused a salutary awe, and the results were blessed and glorious.

14. *And believers, &c.* Literally, *Believing persons.* Though the *unbelievers*—"those without"—"the rest"—dared not obtrude themselves falsely and join their assemblies, true believers were the more largely added. In this way it was shown how much the people held the Christians in respect. This was the progress which the Church made among the people. Though mere deceivers, like Ananias and Sapphira, were struck with awe, and dared not to join the Church, as those hypocrites

had done, yet *true believers* were added *all the more*. That is, these events, which kept back the worldly and insincere from falsely joining themselves to the Disciples, served to bring forward true believers "all the more." They proved a means of grace to such as, with good and honest hearts, received the Word. And the result was that the membership received still larger accessions, and the cause gained a new impulse. ¶ *To the Lord.* Not merely to the *Church*, as Ananias. Here the new converts are said to be added "to the Lord," (*i. e.* to Christ,) as in ch. 2 they are spoken of as added to the Church by the Lord. Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body. These members are added to Him. The numbers are no longer given, as in ch. 4: 4, since the Church grew to greater size. ¶ *Women* are here distinctly mentioned for the first time as among the converts—perhaps because Sapphira's case had just been related, and the effect upon her sex may be signified thus.

15. If we read the foregoing verses without a parenthesis, as is most natural, then this verse connects the large increase of converts with this extensive presentation of their sick for miraculous cures. The connection, however, is with the whole paragraph preceding, and looks back to the record in vss. 12 and 13 also. The object is to show how largely the membership increased, together with the influence of the Church upon the community every way. The term rendered "*insomuch*" sums up the various antecedents which account for the practice about to be related. Miracles were wrought, (vs. 12,) the Disciples met together as a distinct body in Solomon's Porch—the people held them in great reverence, (vs. 13,)—the membership was

16 There came also a multitude *out of the cities round* about unto Jerusalem, bringing <sup>o Mark 6: 17,</sup> sick folks, and them <sup>18,</sup> which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were <sup>John 14: 12.</sup> healed every one.

17 ¶ Then the high priest rose up, and all they that <sup>p ch. 4: 2, 3, 6.</sup>

very much increased, so that, (as a result of all this,) they (the believers) brought forth the sick for miraculous healing by the Apostles. ¶ *Into the streets.* Rather, *Down to, or Throughout, or Along the streets.* The exact reading is, "So as along the streets to bring forth the sick." "*Streets,*" including *open squares*—the places of public resort, such as are found in Oriental cities, around the gates, and elsewhere. ¶ *Beds and couches.* The sick were brought forth and laid on these beds. The different terms here used, may refer to the beds of the richer and poorer classes. The former term is found nowhere else in the New Testament. The latter was probably the coarser pallet used by the common people. *Alford* thinks the distinction unfounded. But the oldest and best lexicographers favor it. The idea is, that the rich and poor alike were engaged in this—the rich on their beds, the poor on their pallets. ¶ *That at the least—In order that.* This was their object in so doing. Literally, *That Peter coming, (when he came,) even if (if only,) the shadow might overshadow any one of them.* That is, in his daily passing to and from the public assembly in Solomon's Porch. They crowded around where he was passing along, and their simple confidence was such that they hoped for some efficacy even from his shadow, if they could get no nearer. This was the faith which Christ commended in the woman, who in the crowd strove to touch (if it were but) the hem of his garment, which in itself could have no more virtue than the shadow here, (Matt. 9: 22.) The power was of God, and the weakness of the means would show the presence of such Divine power in them. It is not said that Peter's shadow had any miraculous effect, but only that the people so zealously and confidently

crowded along his path, aiming to get within his shadow, if no more, and saying in themselves, (as the woman with our Lord,) "If I may but be reached by his shadow, I shall be healed." That this does not prove Peter's primacy or Popeship, is plain, since we find a similar account of Paul's miracles, (ch. 19: 12.)

16. This is the first notice that we have of converts from out of Jerusalem, since the Pentecost. The Wiclif version has it, "And the multitude of the cities nigh to Jerusalem ran." There came "*also,*" besides this, ¶ *A multitude.* Rather, *the multitude*—the mass—the body of the people. ¶ *Out of the cities.* Rather, *the population of the surrounding cities came together into Jerusalem.* See Isa. 2: 1-4. ¶ *Bringing.* Literally, *bearing, carrying.* ¶ *Sick folks.* Literally, *the sick.* ¶ *Vexed.* Literally, *disturbed, perturbed*—as if by a crowd of evil spirits. Here is the first mention in this history of demoniacal possessions, which are so often referred to by Luke in his Gospel narrative. (See Luke 4: 33-35.) They are here distinguished from diseases, (see in the preceding clause,) yet they doubtless often produced disease. ¶ *They were healed every one.* Literally *they were healed all.* Wiclif—*which all were healed.* This is the gracious result. It was made unto them according to their faith. Those who sought to come within the shadow, if they could get no nearer, may be supposed to be included.

§ 9. THE FIRST IMPRISONMENT OF THE TWELVE — (*Sadducean*) — MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE — PETER — GAMALIEL. Jerusalem. A. D. 30-36. Ch. 5: 17-42.

We see here another step taken in that hostility which Judaism has al-

For *envy*. were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and  
 g Luke 21:12. were filled with || indignation,  
 18 And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them  
 in the common prison.

ready set up against Christianity. We saw the two Apostles (Peter and John,) thrust into prison over night to await their trial in the morning, (ch. 4:1.) Now we see "the Apostles," all of them, imprisoned without any apparent limitation, and on the ground of a previous decision and condemnation of their doctrine, (see vs. 28.) Besides, here we find the High Priest entering into the strife, and thus this imprisonment assumes a more official and national aspect, as the act of the Jewish Church through its official representative and head.

17. *Then*. Not only *after that*, but as a *consequence* of the foregoing, and occasioned by it. This wonder-working power so amazingly popular, alarmed the chief functionaries. The Sadducees were yet taking the lead in the opposition, as in ch. 4:1. ¶ *The high priest*. This was probably *Annas*, who is named (ch. 4:6,) as high priest, or it may have been Caiaphas, who was the acting high priest at the time, but by Roman authority and not by Jewish law. According to the latter, Annas was the high priest until his death. (Ex. 9:44.) But as the Romans usurped the prerogative of appointing or removing from this office according to their pleasure, within the priestly line and order, the greatest confusion obtained. Hence, Luke names both Annas and Caiaphas as being both of them high priests (Luke 3:2,) at the same time. ¶ *Rose up—having risen up*. The term implies some special excitement, (and not any formal judicial act,) under which he proceeds to the hostilities named, vs. 18. ¶ *They that were with him*. Meaning not the Sanhedrim, (who are mentioned in vs. 21, as distinct from these,) but those who joined with him in his views and plans—his party. See ch. 4:14; 19:38; 22:9. This is explained in the next clause as referring to the sect of the Sadducees. The language in the Greek implies that

the whole sect of the Sadducees were of the high priest's party in opposition to our Lord, and that it was the Sadducees' party in the Sanhedrim. See vs. 21, Notes. Whether Annas and Caiaphas were of this sect, or whether they were Pharisees, as some suppose, (ch. 23:6,) cannot be determined, though some think the meaning to be that they were of this sect, and in a manner represented them. Certain it is, that the party with him were mainly of that sect, and this is recorded to call our attention to the fact that these, who denied the resurrection and the world of spirits, were the first opposers of Christianity, and this because the Apostles preached the doctrine of the Resurrection, as shown in *the case of Christ*. Meanwhile, the Pharisees hated the Sadducees so much that they rather kept silence and almost sided with the Disciples, while these their enemies were in the opposition. At a later time, however, the Pharisees were the prominent party in the hostilities: and these rival sects were joined at last against Christ, like Pilate and Herod. (See ch. 4:1.) ¶ *Sect*. The term here used is that which we in English have transferred directly from the Greek—*heresy*. It is used as we would use the word *party* or *division*, and not in the modern sense, with reference to fatal errors—though the Sadducees were *heretics*. Originally, the word means simply *option* or *choice*, as we say "*persuasion*." ¶ *Indignation*. Here we have another Greek term which is transferred to the English word, *zeal*. It means commonly any ardor of mind in a good or bad sense, but here it expresses envy and party spirit. They were moved at the popularity of the Apostles, and afraid of their own cause being lost with the people, and indignant at the currency thus given to the doctrine of the resurrection.

18. *Laid their hands*. This refers to

19 But \*the angel of the Lord by night opened the <sup>† ch. 12: 7, and 16: 26.</sup> prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,

20 Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people \*all <sup>† John 6: 68, and 17: 8. 1 John 5: 11.</sup> the words of this life.

21 And when they heard *that*, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. \*But the high <sup>† ch. 4: 5, 6.</sup>

their arrest. The next clause relates the result. ¶ *The Apostles*. That is the twelve, vs. 20. ¶ *Common prison*. The terms mean *public custody*. No reference is had to an inferior jail for lowest criminals. The public prison was used as being more secure. In ch. 4: 3, the term here rendered *prison* is translated *hold*. The Wiclif version has it the *common ward*.

19. *The angel*. Literally, *An angel*, without any particular reference to one rather than another angel. "The Angel" in the Old Testament sense would mean the Covenant Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, we suppose, is not meant here. The deliverance was plainly miraculous. Angels are employed by God on such errands of salvation. Heb. 1: 14. While the high priests, the servants of the Old Israel, prove faithless, the angels, the heavenly servants of the New Israel, most conspicuously fulfill their office. ¶ *By night*. The deliverance was wrought between the days, as being thus more surprising and alarming. The men that were seen safely in their confinement at nightfall, were missing in the morning, and no watchman disturbed, and no trace of the mode of escape! The effect of this upon their enemies is seen in vs. 23. ¶ *Opened the prison doors*. The miracle consisted in opening the barred doors as no human power could do it. It would seem also that the doors were closed again by the same miraculous agency. This added to the surprise, vs. 23. How could they have escaped, would be the question. Through what opening, as the doors were shut "*with all safety*?" By what intervention in spite of these iron doors and bars? How else, indeed, than by God?

20. *Go*—Lit., *Go forth*. They were set free, and this address of the angel is that they exercise their freedom

without any feeling of restraint. ¶ *Stand*—*having taken your stand*—implying firm, free and calm action. ¶ *In the temple*. That is, as publicly as before, and more. Instead of in "Solomon's Porch," they were to take their stand in the second inclosure itself, as distinguished by the term here used from the building as a whole. Their instructions are, to speak or discourse *to the people*, now that their priests and rulers would not hear. ¶ *All the words*—concealing or keeping back nothing, however odious— withholding not even the doctrine of "the Resurrection and the life," for fear of this violent hostility of the Sadducees. ¶ *Of this life*. *This life* which embraces the Resurrection: as Christ Himself is "the Resurrection and the Life," (John 11: 25,) and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, (2 Tim. 1: 10.) "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men," John 1: 4. *This life*, spiritual and heavenly, is quite different from that which the Sadducees held, who denied the soul's immortality and the life eternal. "Christ is the way, and the truth, and the life," (John 14: 6.) The Gospel is called "the word of this salvation," (ch. 13: 26.)

21. *When they heard*. This is said to show their prompt obedience to the angelic directions. ¶ *Early*—Lit., *about, upon, or at daybreak*. Strictly understood it may mean, *just before day-dawn*. ¶ *Came*. Lit., *The high-priest having arrived*—that is, at the session chamber of the Sanhedrim in the temple, ch. 6: 14. ¶ *And they that were with him*—the same as spoken of in vs. 17—those of his party. ¶ *The council*. The supreme council or court of the nation—the Sanhedrim. The Greek shows that those who *were* with him took part in the call of the

priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

22 But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

23 Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

<sup>n</sup> Luke 22: 4.  
ch. 4: 1.

24 Now when the high priest and "the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow."

council, and the term denotes a formal convening. ¶ *All the senate—the eldership.* It would seem that besides calling the Sanhedrim together, a part of whom were *elders*, they summoned, also, all "*the elders of the Jews*," though not belonging to this supreme court, (see ch. 4: 8; ch. 25: 15,) yet important as representing the synagogues, and as men of wisdom and counsel, for such an emergency. They were noted as foes of Jesus and of His doctrine. ¶ *The prison.* This term is not the same as is used in vs. 18 or 19, but another, signifying a *place of confinement*—(the whole building.) The term used in vs. 22, (same as in vs. 19,) conveys the idea of a guard—as we say, "*watch-house*," the particular ward or cell. ¶ *To have them brought.* Lit., *For them to be brought*—commanding them to be brought.

22. *The officers.* Lit., *The servants* (of the Sanhedrim) *having come—arrived*—(the same word as is used of the high-priest, vs. 21,) *did not find them in the prison* (cell); *and having returned they reported.*

23. *The prison.* This is the term used in vs. 21, meaning the building itself. They found the jail *shut up* (an emphatic term) "*with all safety*," (perfect security,) no trace of being broken open, all the doors and bolts just as they ought to be, thoroughly secure. *Wiclif*—"with all diligence." The angel who miraculously opened the prison doors, (vs. 19,) had closed them after him, so as to leave them precisely as they were found. This puzzled the officers most of all, ¶ *Keepers.*

Lit., *Guards*—from which the term for "*prison*," in vss. 19 and 23, is taken. This would show that the guards had been at their post; and that the Apostles had not escaped by their absence or inadvertence. ¶ *Before the doors.* The guards were found standing before the *very prison doors* that the angel had opened and closed after him, vs. 19. ¶ *When we had opened.* Lit., *Having opened.* They opened now in a natural way, the very doors that the angel opened miraculously. But they found no one inside.

24. *The high-priest.* Lit., *The priest.* That is, by eminence, *in chief*—meaning, of course, the high-priest, as already referred to. ¶ *Captain of the temple.* This officer was the guardian of the sacred house, one of the chief priests, perhaps a member of the Sanhedrim, and set to enforce the Mosaic observances. (See ch. 4: 1.) He was one of "those that were with the high-priest," vss. 17, 21. ¶ *The chief priests—high-priests*—the heads of the twenty-four courses appointed by David, 1 Chron. 24, or possibly, also, those who had been high-priests under the Roman appointment, just as Annas and Caiaphas, (and doubtless several others at least,) were high-priests instead of one, as provided for by the Jewish law. See ch. 4: 6. ¶ *They doubted.* The word is more forcible, and means, *they were in perplexity.* ¶ *Concerning them—these things, or these Apostles.* ¶ *Whereunto, &c.* Lit., *What would come of this, or, What this would become*—how it would turn out. They were at an utter loss to conceive

25 Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

26 Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: \*for they feared the people, lest <sup>z Matt 21: 26.</sup> they should have been stoned.

27 And when they had brought them, they set *them* before the council: and the high priest asked them,

28 Saying, <sup>y ch. 4: 18.</sup> Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, <sup>z ch. 2: 23-36, and 3: 15, and 7: 52.</sup> and intend to bring this man's <sup>a Matt. 23: 35, and 27: 25.</sup> blood upon us.

what this would result in, if things went on in this amazing manner as regarding these men.

25. They get now some light upon the subject. The prisoners are found, at least. ¶ *Came one.* Literally, *one arriving*—the same word as used before. *The (very) men whom ye put in prison, are (not there, but on the contrary,) standing in the temple and teaching the people.*

26. *The captain*—of the temple—the commander of the Levitical guard. (See vs. 24.) ¶ *With the officers*—the servants of the court. Literally, *Then the captain having departed with the officers.* ¶ *Brought them, not by force*—not binding them as else they would have done. Matthew 27: 2. This refers not to the unresisting manner of the Apostles so much as to the manner of the officers, as is shown by the reason annexed. ¶ *For.* This shows that *the people*, to whom they discoursed, were warmly in their favor, and they feared that any attempt at violence or cruelty in bringing them to the court would result in themselves being stoned. Lit., *in order that they might not be stoned.* The Apostles might have appealed to this popular feeling, but they did not. They submitted to the lawful authority. It was not from the Disciples that they apprehended the stoning, but from the fickle multitude whom they afterwards used as instruments of persecution. *Stoning* was now the capital punishment under the Jewish law.

27. *When, &c.* Literally, *having brought them.* ¶ *They set them*—set them up—stationed or presented them. See ch 1: 23, where the same word is used.

28. *Did not we, &c.* One would suppose, says Chrysostom, that the first thing asked would have been, how did you escape? But as if nothing had happened, he asked about their teaching. The high priest was the chief religious functionary of the nation—the representative of the religious interest of the people, (see Zech. 3: 1,) and hence the presiding officer in the Supreme Court. ¶ *Straitly.* The phrase used here is, *Did we not command you with a command.* He is ashamed to speak of *threatening*, (ch. 4: 17,) for they had not the power to punish. How he sets up their command, and the enormity of violating it, while God's command would pass for nothing! The question implies that the Apostles were bound to obey the order of the Sanhedrim, as they would have been, had not the command of God been most directly and clearly contrary to it, vs. 29. ¶ *In this name.* i. e. of *Jesus.* Bengel remarks that, "The high priest avoids using the name of Jesus. Peter uses it and glories in it." vs. 30, 31. Literally, *upon this name*, (as their authority, ch. 4: 18.) ¶ *And, behold,* (on the contrary,) you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, so that it has spread throughout the city and among all classes. ¶ *Bring this man's blood upon us.* This was indeed what the high priest and his followers profanely said, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matt. 27: 25. They began now to fear being held responsible for Christ's murder, and that, by the very people whom they had urged on to the crucifixion. Conscience was condemn-



5 ch. 4: 19.  
 e ch. 3: 13, 15,  
 and 22: 14.  
 d ch. 10: 39,  
 and 13: 29.  
 Gal. 3: 13.  
 1 Pet. 2: 24.  
 e ch. 2: 33, 36.  
 Phil. 2: 9.  
 Heb. 2: 10, & 12: 2.

29 ¶ Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, <sup>b</sup> We ought to obey God rather than men.

30 °The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and <sup>a</sup>hanged on a tree.

31 °Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be*

ing them. This doctrine which had so spread among the people did indeed teach that Jesus was wickedly put to death by the Jews. But this was not with any intent to excite the popular vengeance against the leaders, but rather to urge them to repentance in order to pardon and salvation. **OBSERVE.**—This miraculous deliverance was not wasted, because of the Apostles being retaken. It was intended as a sign from God, and it had its effect upon the Sanhedrim, vs. 24.

29. *Peter and the (other) apostles.* Peter, as usual, appears as spokesman. The phraseology is peculiar, and would read, "And Peter answering, the Apostles also said." Peter spake for them all. They expressed their concurrence. ¶ *We ought, &c.* Literally, *It is necessary to obey.* They acknowledged the Sanhedrim as the ordinary religious authority whom it would be right to obey except in case of such a clear, unmistakable command of God to the contrary. And here they declare they have no option. There is an absolute *necessity* laid upon them. The term here rendered *to obey*, is peculiar, and expresses the idea of obedience to *authority*, translated "*to obey magistrates,*" Titus 3: 1. In ch. 4: 19, they had challenged their persecutors to deny this clear, unquestioned principle; and here they say (not, "*we ought,*" but) *it is necessary*, in every case as well as in ours. It is a necessity which cannot be set aside. **OBSERVE.**—There could be no doubt of the Divine command in this case, at it was expressly signified by the angel, (vs. 20.) **OBSERVE.**—They made no forcible resistance to the authorities, but patiently bore the penalties and gave their testimony.

30. After stating the principle of their obedience to God, they gave a synopsis of Christ's history as being the work of the God of their Jewish

fathers, of the very Jehovah whom they, the Jews, boasted of worshiping. This would bring the necessity of obedience home to the Sanhedrim also, and all the accusers. ¶ *Raised up.* Their treatment of Christ is put in direct contrast with that of "the God of their fathers," Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whom they all, as Jews, boasted. While they slew Him, their national covenant God *raised Him up*, i. e. from the dead. And this act of Resurrection was the Divine seal set upon Christ's work, and thus it authorized their obedience in preaching and teaching in the name of Christ. ¶ *Ye slew and hanged.* Literally, *Ye slew, having hanged—slew by hanging.* The term here rendered "*slew*" is different from those elsewhere used, (to kill, crucify, &c.) and expresses a more personal action—literally, *handed*—as elsewhere he urges home their personal participation in Christ's death "*by wicked hands,*" (ch. 2: 23.) ¶ *On a tree*—(crucified.) Though the Jewish law pronounces every one accursed who "*hangs on a tree,*" its reference is not distinctly to the punishment of crucifixion, which was a Roman punishment and not Jewish. It referred originally to the ignominious exposure of the dead body of a criminal on a post or a tree. Yet the curse of the law is so worded that it applies to this punishment of crucifixion, especially as the custom was to leave the dead body exposed on the cross. See Deut. 21: 22; Gen. 40: 19. The point of this is that He whom they held to be accursed and treated most ignominiously had been glorified by God. (Rom. 1: 2.)

31. *Him*—*This one* (τοῦτον) *hath God exalted.* God has lifted Him up to honor and glory, as ye lifted Him up to shame. ¶ *With his right hand.* Rather, *At*, or *to His right hand*, to sit there, (Psalm 110: 1,) asso-

'a Prince and \*a Saviour, \*for to give repentance to Israel, <sup>fch. 3:15.</sup> and forgiveness of sins. <sup>g Matt. 1:21.</sup>

32 And <sup>h Luke 24:47.</sup> we are his witnesses of these things; and <sup>ch. 3:26, & 13:38.</sup> so is <sup>Eph. 1:7.</sup> also the Holy Ghost, <sup>Col. 1:14.</sup> \*whom God hath given to them that <sup>† John 15:26, 27.</sup> obey him. <sup>k ch. 2:4, and 10:44.</sup>

ciated in the dominion, (Psalm 45 : 9.) or if, as some take it, the sense is, "with or by His right hand," then it is to show God to be the *doer* of this omnipotent act, Rom. 1 : 2. The latter is favored by the parallel reading, ch. 2 : 33. (*To be*) a Prince—Captain—"Author of salvation," Heb. 2 : 10, elevated Him as a Prince—this One who is a Prince—"Prince of Life," (ch. 3 : 15,) leading the way; or, elevated Him (to sit) as a Prince upon His throne, as Mediator, for the purpose of giving repentance. So Heb. 2 : 9. "We see Jesus crowned with glory and honor that He, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man." So Ps. 110 : 5. ¶ *And a Saviour.* A Prince, as having all authority and so to be obeyed; and a Saviour, as using His authority to give salvation, able to save to the uttermost, &c., Heb. 7 : 25. "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth, Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. Jesus must be Prophet and King to all to whom He is Priest. He is a Saviour to those only who accept Him as their Lord. ¶ *To give repentance.* He uses His supreme power for this end. It requires Omnipotence to work true repentance, which implies a new creation. It is of the new birth, which is not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. So faith is said to be the gift of God. See ch. 11 : 18; 2 Tim. 2 : 25; Eph. 2 : 8. *Bengel* remarks, that "repentance is a joyous gift, not a sad business." As Prince and Saviour, Jesus gives repentance. This is His royal prerogative as the Prince of Life. So, as Prince and Saviour, He gives forgiveness of sins. They are both His free gift. He does not give forgiveness as a reward of repentance, but the one is as truly a gift as the other. "Free forgiveness in His name." Repentance,

however, must precede forgiveness, but grace in the heart must precede both. ¶ *To Israel.* Even to you, Israel. The grace is preached even to these blood-stained sinners, (who confess that they have shed His blood, vs. 28,) for "the goodness of God leadeth us to repentance," (Rom. 2 : 4.) It was as much as to say, "He is exalted to give repentance to you and forgiveness." It also intimated that the offer was made first to Israel, (see ch. 3 : 26,) and that He gives these to the true Israel, the people of His new and better covenant, His own elect. This implies that Peter still cherishes a special hope for Israel, yet he sees that there is no hope for them, except in the Divine favor and grace. ¶ *And forgiveness.* John the Baptist preached to Israel "the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," (Luke 3 : 3,) the baptism that set forth those great ideas, and involved a profession of such repentance. But Christ gives repentance in order to the forgiveness which He also freely gives.

32. *His witnesses.* As Apostles they were chosen by God to be witnesses of these things—these words histories, things expressed in words—as of) His Life, Death, and especially of His Resurrection, vs. 30; ch. 1 : 8-22; 2 : 32, 40. Hence they could not cease to bear witness. They had no option, for they had no right to cease, if they would. ¶ *The Holy Ghost.* They were not alone in this witness, for the Holy Spirit bore witness also to these great truths, by miraculous signs which accompanied their testimony, and by the inspiration of their written Scripture—witness. So it was promised in John 15 : 26. ¶ *To them that obey Him.* Lit., *That yield obedience to Him as their Leader, Captain, Prince.* This term refers back to vs. 29, where it is used in the same sense. The whole drift then is :

John 2: 37, and 7: 54.

33 ¶ When they heard *that*, they were cut to the heart, and took counsel to slay them.

Acts ch. 22: 3.

34 Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space;

It is necessary for us to yield obedience to God as our Prince and Saviour, rather than to man. The very Jehovah of the Jews has clearly recognized Him by most miraculously raising Him from the dead; and now He has glorified Him as the Saviour of Israel. We are set to be His witnesses to men, and hence we cannot be silent; nay, we have the Holy Ghost also bearing witness with us, in miracles and by inspiration, and how can we forbear? And especially, since the Holy Ghost is given to those *who obey God*, (vs. 29,) and thus we must give His witness, since we cannot consent to disobey God. "We cannot but speak the things that we have seen and heard." "We can do nothing against the truth but for the truth." See Rom. 8: 16; Gal. 4: 6; 1 John 3: 24.

33. *Cut (to the heart.)* The Wiclif version reads, *Were tormented*. Tyn-dale, *They clave asunder*. The idea expressed is of being *sawn asunder*, or *ground in pieces*, as with the teeth of a saw, "cut through with rage." See ch. 7: 54. It was not that experience of being "pricked to the heart," (ch. 2: 37,) which was so salutary in its results, but that tormenting "sense of guilt mixed with wrath," which was a more mangling sensation. ¶ *Took counsel*. The Geneva reads, "*They sought means*." More exactly, *They were deliberating, or purposing*—taking counsel with the intent to *slay them*. This was a further advance in their persecuting movements. They now began to plot for their lives, as they had done for the life of the Master Himself.

34. *Stood there up*. Literally, *A certain one rising up, or having risen*, (as if to say or do something important.) ¶ *In the council*. In the Sanhedrim, as the word meaning council or assembly

is transferred to our language. He was a member of this court. ¶ *A Pharisee*. He was of the party opposed to the Sadducees, and therefore having no sympathy with them in their persecution of the Apostles for their doctrine of the Resurrection. We need not suppose that he favored the Apostles at all as followers of Jesus. He was probably the Gamaliel who was the teacher of Saul of Tarsus, (ch. 22: 3.) He is said to have been one of the seven Rabbis, to whom the Jews gave the title *Rabboni*, "My Master," (John 20: 16,) the son of Symon, supposed to be the same as Simeon, Luke 2: 25, and the grandson of Hillel. Some traditions would make him to have become a Christian, but there is no evidence of this. ¶ *Gamaliel*. The name means "*reward from God*." See Num. 1: 10. ¶ *A doctor of the law*. This is expressed by one term meaning *a teacher of the law*. He is thought by many without reason, to have been president of the Sanhedrim on account of his legal fame. ¶ *Had in reputation*. This is expressed in the Greek by one word, which means *highly prized*—highly esteemed—honorable. Wiclif reads, *a worshipful man*. ¶ *All the people*. Even though not esteemed among the opposing sect of the Sadducees. These latter were more influential with the higher classes, while the Pharisees were more generally popular. He was evidently a leader of the opposition to the Sadducees. ¶ *Commanded*. *Proposed*, or, as we say in deliberative bodies, *moved*—not, as some understand it, with any authority as if he could have been president of the Sanhedrim, for this chair belonged exclusively to the high priest. ¶ *To put the apostles forth*—"to cause them to withdraw." Wiclif reads, "*Commanded the men to be put without*

35 And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

36 For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as <sup>|| Or, believed.</sup> obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought.

37 After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed.

forth for a while." ¶ *A little space. A little while*—which may be what is meant by our version—"a little season—space of time."

35. *Unto them*—to the Sanhedrim—not, as might seem, to the *Apostles*. ¶ *Ye men of Israel—Men, Israelites—take heed to yourselves, in respect to these men, what ye are about to do.* He thus cautions them against carrying out their purpose to slay them, (vs. 33,) and he refers them to previous instances of insurrection which resulted disastrously to the insurgents.

36. *Before these days.* This was a historical fact which was probably familiar to the council, and he does not give the date, except in these general terms. It was probably about the time of Christ's birth. ¶ *Rose up—Arose.* ¶ *Theudas.* Because Josephus names such an one as leader of an insurrection some fifteen years after this time, Luke has been charged with putting into Gamaliel's mouth an error. But it would be necessary to suppose that Luke invented this whole reference to Theudas, and that Gamaliel did not mention him at all, if we are to believe that he arose not until twelve or thirteen years after Gamaliel's speech. Josephus speaking also of this very time, refers to thousands of such insurgents, among whom there might easily have been one of this common name: as there were three Judases within ten years, all leaders of insurrections. Josephus might more easily have made the mistake, as he is full of inaccuracies. Yet as this was only a leader of 400 men, the Jewish historian would not likely have noticed him. Moreover, it could not be the same Theudas as is related

by Josephus, since he was judicially beheaded, and therefore it would not be a case in point, as he wished to show that there was no need of official interference, but that it would come to nought if let alone. OBSERVE.—"God can every where raise up defenders." Bengel. ¶ *Boasting himself, &c.* Literally, *Saying that himself was somebody*, a person of importance. He claimed to be a great prophet. He persuaded his followers to go with him to the Jordan, and promised that he would divide the river and lead them across. ¶ *Obeeyed him.* Rather — *Believed in him.* ¶ *Brought to nought.* Notwithstanding his lofty pretensions.

37. This case is related by Josephus, (*Ant.* xvii. 10, 5; xviii. 1, 1,) who twice speaks of this Judas as a Galilean and once as a Gaulonite, probably from his having been born in Gaulonitis. ¶ *The taxing.* The term properly means the enrolment or registration of names or property for census and taxation. It is the same term used in Luke 2: 2, and here it is probably the *payment* that is referred to, while in Luke 2: 2; (see *Notes*,) it is the preparatory enrolment. This view explains also that passage, "This enrolment (for taxing,) first took effect when Cyrenius was governor of Syria." It was the enforcement of this tax that led to the insurrection here named; inasmuch as the Jews did not hold it to be right to pay tribute to a foreign and oppressive power. This Judas excited the people against the payment of the tax. *Josephus Antiq.* xviii. 1, 6. Though it was one and the same, ἀπογραφὴ as is referred to by Luke in his gospel history, (2: 2,) this *payment* was about ten

in Prov. 21:30.  
Isa. 8:10.  
Matt. 15:13.

o Luke 21:15.  
1 Cor. 1:25.  
p ch. 7:51, and  
9:5, and 23:9.

38 And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: "for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39 "But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even "to fight against God.

40 And to him they agreed: and when they had

years after the *enrollment* there mentioned. This Judas represented that the decree for this taxing was an introduction to slavery, and that the payment would be a violation of their allegiance to Jehovah. ¶ *He also perished.* Josephus records the fact that his sons were cut off, but says nothing of the fate of Judas himself. ¶ *Dispersed, ("Scattered abroad," Tyndale, &c.)* as by sudden violence.

38. Gamaliel having cited these two well-known cases in point, urges the practical counsel, which he introduces by the earnest words, "*Now, I say unto you.*" ¶ *Refrain from.* Literally, *stand off from these men*—that is, from laying hands upon them, as they were proposing to do. ¶ *Let them alone.* Rather, *suffer them*—to do as they are doing. Leave them undisturbed in their work. That this is the meaning is plain from the context. ¶ *For if, &c.* This is the ground of his advice—that their work could fairly be left to the dealing of God, which, in case of Theudas and Judas, as cited, had brought the wicked counsels to nought. ¶ *This counsel—purpose, plan, enterprise.* ¶ *Or this work.* That is—Whether the scheme itself or the working of it be considered—"if it be of men"—of mere human origin. ¶ *It will come to nought.* Literally, *it will be dissolved*—it can and will be dissolved, "either by you or by others, or of itself."—Bengel. This cannot be relied on as a certain rule, because many religious systems of merely human origin have stood a long while. And on such principle we must wait to see the end before we can decide. Yet, as a general rule it may be asserted, especially in a case like this, of introducing new religious tenets and observances. But this is not an inspired rule. It is Gamaliel's doctrine, as the Pharisees were inclined to fatalism. Some

suppose he could not have advanced it had he not been half convinced of the truth of this religion. But this does not follow. Gamaliel, who presented a very common sense view to the people as Jews, might easily argue that if Jesus were indeed the Messiah, then the promises made to Israel must be realized, and that, fairly enough, the result might be relied on to decide it. Doubtless every religious system of mere human origin will at last come to nought. OBSERVE.—Gamaliel the Pharisee, may have been influenced to this moderation by the opposition of the Sadducees, and by the fear that they would take such measures against the Apostles as would give their sect the popular advantage. This "let-alone" policy may even have been a show of moderation to compromise the matter, and merely from fear of the people. See vs. 26. OBSERVE.—The *Christian* religion has proved itself to be from God, as it has met every form of opposition, and still advanced.

39. *But.* It was just as clear that if this system which the Apostles preached was really of God—as was claimed—it was immovable by any human assault. ¶ *Ye cannot overthrow it. Ye are not able to work its dissolution.* The term used here is the same as in the former verse is rendered, "*come to nought.*" ¶ *Lest haply—Lest at any time,* (if you think to be able, and make the attempt)—*ye be found also fighters against God*—lest ye turn out to be—not only opposers of these men, but also opponents of God Himself.

40. *They agreed.* Rather—*they were persuaded by him:* that is, so far as to refrain from putting them to death; but not so as to let them alone, as advised, vs. 38. They even beat them, and forbade them to go on teaching their doctrine. ¶ *Called the Apo*

\*called the apostles, \*and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 ¶ And they departed from the presence of the council, \*rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

42 And daily \*in the temple, and in every house, \* they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

*iles*, (having summoned them to appear before the Sanhedrim,) *when they had beaten them*, (literally, *flayed* them—expressing the severity of the scourging)—*they commanded them* (as before,) *not to speak in the name of Jesus*,—and (then) *loosed* (released) *them*. This scourging was commonly done by “a whip with two lashes knotted with bones or heavy indented circles of bronze, or terminated by hooks, in which case it was aptly denominated a *scorpion*.” This punishment was resorted to as a compromise. Yet it was either too little or too much. See Deut. 25: 2. Paul suffered this five times, 2 Cor. 14: 24.—They act like Pilate, Luke 23: 16. They can only express their spite by the scourging—and must be content with repeating a command which had just been violated.

41. *And they departed*. Rather, *they, however*, (notwithstanding all this beating and command,) *departed, rejoicing, from the presence*, &c. They went out from the council with joy beaming in their faces. The joy of suffering for Christ’s sake so greatly outweighed the pain that many in the latter ages even coveted martyrdom. (Tertull. ad Scap V.) But the primitive Church sets no such example. So long as they could at all continue preaching they did so, (vs. 42.) But when the persecution grew furious (as ch. 8: 1,) they fled to another place, as Christ had directed them to do, (Matt. 10:23,) ch. 12: 17. ¶ *Counted worthy*. *Counted worthy* (by God) *to suffer shame* (from man) *for His name*, (Luke 16: 15,) worthy to be disgraced for Christ! See Phil. 1: 29; Matt. 5: 12; Luke 6: 22; James 1: 2; 1 Peter 2: 19. They left the presence of the men by whose order and before whom they had been scour-

ged, not with a sense of degradation and shame, but with exultation and joy. Luke 23: 40. They esteemed themselves highly honored in being regarded by the Sanhedrim as deserving such treatment, since it was their testimony that they were conspicuous and bold in Christ’s service. And they counted it all joy that God had thought them worthy to use them as His suffering servants. This put most distinguished honor upon them while they were most disgraced before men. This is the true Christian spirit in all ages. Even lately in India, this is the spirit with which men and women—native and foreign—have met the most fiendish persecutions. ¶ *His name*. For all that the profession of His name involved—as His Disciples—casting in their lot with His cause. They rejoiced that they were “made partakers of Christ’s sufferings,” (1 Peter 4: 13,) and that “their reward was great in heaven,” (Matt. 5: 12.) and that they could “fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ,” and they “counted it all joy, knowing that the trial of their faith wrought patience, that they might be perfect and entire, wanting nothing,” (Jas. 1: 2-4,) and “knowing that in heaven they had a better and more enduring substance,” (Heb. 10: 34,) “esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt, for they had respect unto the recompense of the reward.”

42. Besides their feeling of joy instead of humiliation, their conduct evinced their superiority to all the violence and command of the Sanhedrim. They did what was most consistent with their Christian principle; not swayed at all from their fixed course by all

g ch. 4: 18.  
f Matt. 10: 17,  
and 23: 34.  
Mark 13: 9.

\* Matt. 5: 12.  
Rom. 5: 3.  
2 Cor. 12: 10.  
Phil. 1: 29.  
Heb. 10: 34.  
James 1: 2.  
1 Pet. 4: 13, 16.  
t ch. 2: 46.  
u ch. 4: 20-29.

## CHAPTER VI.

a ch. 2:41, and  
4:4, and 5:14,  
and vs. 7.  
b ch. 9:29, and  
11:20.

c ch. 4:35.

1 AND in those days, <sup>a</sup> when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the <sup>b</sup> Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected <sup>c</sup> in the daily ministration.

that their enemies had done. They were commanded to cease teaching and preaching, (vs. 40,) but they *ceased not*. They were commanded not to speak in Christ's name, but they spake *daily* and diligently in the temple and in the house—in private houses, not "*in every house*," but in their social assemblies which were held in different parts of the city in private houses, as distinguished from their more public labors in the temple, ch. 2:46. ¶ *To teach and preach*—to teach, (as a doctrine,) and to preach, (as good news.) This is the sense of the latter term, literally rendered *evangelize*—to preach the Gospel, to proclaim as good news Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah, the Saviour of sinners. "*Jesus*" (Saviour) "*Christ*" (Messiah, anointed as Prophet, Priest, and King of Israel.) This was the subject of their preaching—"Jesus Christ and Him crucified," (1 Cor. 2:2.)

## CHAPTER VI.

§ 10. THE FIRST INTERNAL DISSENSION—HELLENISTIC WIDOWS—INSTITUTION OF DEACONS. *Jerusalem.* Ch. 6:1-7.

The object of the historian is now to give the further development of the Church, as it grew out of the *first dissension* in the body, leading to the *institution of a new office*, (deacon's,) and introducing us to the history of the persecution unto death of one of these, STEPHEN. Some have supposed that deacons had already existed. But though doubtless the exercise of this function had been temporarily intrusted by the Apostles to some persons, not formally chosen and ordained, who are charged with neglect, this account conveys the idea of an altogether new institution. The origin of it is stated,

and all the narrative is such as implies that a new office is here established to suit the necessity of an increasing Church. This has been the universal belief of the Church from the earliest time. It would seem that the property devoted to the common fund had been placed at the disposal of the Apostles, ch. 4:37; 5:2.

1. *In those days*. This is an indefinite expression, meant here to keep up the historical connection, but implying some considerable interval. *About that time*, and in the course of that growth which the Church constantly received from the preaching and persecution already narrated, and such like, *the Disciples multiplying, or becoming numerous*, and thus more liable to such a difficulty, from conflicting interests of many thousand people. ¶ *There arose*. This dissension was suffered to spring up as an occasion for the fuller and more complete regulation of the Church, in a way better suited to its future enlargement. This is a development within the Scripture, however, not beyond it. It gives no ground for the theory of a certain school, that all the novelties of the Papacy are but the development of the Church; for those are outside of, and beyond the Scripture, and find no warrant nor countenance there. ¶ *A murmuring*—lit., *a whispering*, as of discontent, Phil. 2:14; 1 Peter 4:9. ¶ *Grecians*. Not Greeks, or people of Greek descent, but *Hellenists*, as they were called, who being Jews, were dispersed among foreigners and spake the Greek tongue. This was regarded by the strict, exclusive Jews as a step toward heathenism. It proved soon in the history to be a connecting link with the outside world, of great importance for the extension of the Church. Stephen, the Hellenist, soon rises up as the great

2 Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, <sup>d</sup> It is not reason that we should leave <sup>d Ex. 18: 17.</sup> the word of God, and serve tables.

representative of progress, against the bigoted, restricted Jewish exclusiveness. Such Grecians, or Hellenists, were very numerous. Of this class were a majority of those converted at Pentecost, ch. 2. Already, in Alexandria, they had required the translation of the Jewish Scriptures into Greek, nearly three hundred years before Christ. In the Talmud it is said, "Cursed be the man that cherisheth swine, and cursed be he that teacheth his son the wisdom of the Greeks." "And the Rabbis labored to show that the judgments of God followed those who, in opposition to the decree of the Sanhedrim, studied the Greek learning." See *Biscoe on the Acts*, vol. I., 89, 90. ¶ *The Hebrews*. Those Jews of Palestine who used only the Hebrew tongue and Hebrew Scriptures, and counted the Hellenists an inferior and cursed class, Phil. 3 : 5. This would account for the neglect complained of. It was not looked upon as an inadvertence, but as a working of this animosity, which was carried by some of the early Disciples into the Church-membership. ¶ *Because*. Rather, *that*. This was the complaint, whether it was the fact or not. ¶ *Their widows*. This class, as being particularly helpless, are often named in the Scriptures as specially entitled to the care of the Church, Exod. 22 : 22; 1 Tim. 4 : 5; 5 : 3, and they are here instanced as representing all the poor and helpless among them. Probably, in their case, the neglect seemed most flagrant and aggravated; and some of their number were the immediate occasion of the complaint. *Their widows*, the widows belonging to the Grecians or Hellenists, were *neglected*—lit., *overlooked*. This term, conveying the charge or complaint, does not necessarily imply ill-will, but only expresses the fact alleged, that they were *passed by*. ¶ *Daily ministrations*. Lit., in the *daily deaconing*. The name of "deacon" is not mentioned in this nar-

rative; but this term, describing the office-work as that of ministering or dispensing, distributing, is that from which the official term comes afterward in common use. It was probably a distribution of food rather than of money, as we infer from its being *daily*, and from "*serving tables*" being another designation of the work. The neglect or omission here charged, may have arisen from too great pressure of this business, on account of the increasing numbers, while the difficulty is such as would require a separate and regularly constituted and authoritative office. This will account for the tenor of the narrative.

2. *Then—So*, accordingly. ¶ *The twelve*. The body of the Apostles being now complete by the choice of Matthias, (1 : 26,)—*having called together* (or convened by authority,) *the multitude of the Disciples*. It is not to be supposed that the entire membership in all parts was summoned, but an assembly of the whole Church in Jerusalem; all of whom, however, would not necessarily be present. Thus the people are called to their proper share in the rule of the Church, while the divinely appointed officers of the body give direction and exercise control. These are to be remarked as the two leading principles of primitive Church polity as set forth in the New Testament. ¶ *It is not reason—It is not satisfactory*—It is not our pleasure. This is spoken officially, and declares the pleasure and will of God through them. It is not fitting, suitable, and must be discarded. Tyndale—*It is not meet*. ¶ *That we*, (Apostles, who have the higher and more important work to do of preaching the word,) *leaving the word of God*, (as would be the result,) *should serve tables*. The verb here rendered to *serve*, is akin to the noun rendered *ministration*, (vs. 1,) and from these the term *deacon*, (minister or servant,) is taken. *To serve tables* means to distribute the daily supplies for



<sup>6</sup> Deut. 1: 18.  
<sup>sb.</sup> 1: 21, and  
 16: 2.  
 1 Tim. 3: 7.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 2: 42.

3 Wherefore, brethren, <sup>6</sup>look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4 But we <sup>f</sup>will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

meals, Luke 4: 39; 8: 3. The word for "*tables*" is sometimes used for *money tables*, John 2: 15, but as it was "a *daily* ministration," and as the term for "*serving*" has a usage inconsistent with this, we infer that the tables for meals are referred to. Many understand the sacramental tables to be meant, and they take this language as authority for the deacons to serve the table or tables at the Lord's Supper. In the early Church the Lord's Supper was often connected with the family meal, and offerings were made on that occasion for the poor. In this way the idea may have, more or less, obtained.

3. *Wherefore*, on this ground, as stated. ¶ *Brethren*, fellow Disciples. ¶ *Look ye out*. The term here used means *to look at* in order to select, to *seek out* as persons for office. See Gen. 41: 33. The body of the members here make the election, yet the Apostles reserve to themselves the right to confirm the election by their own official designation. The rights of the people were held sacred, while the ministerial right, also, in government, review and control, was maintained, as the two distinctive features in primitive Church polity. How easy for the Apostles to have assumed the absolute and undivided rule, with no reference to the popular element. Yet they were far from such an usurpation in the Church of Christ. ¶ *Seven men*. We venture no reason for this number, except that it is a sacred number in the Scriptures, owing to the original Sabbath appointment, a seventh part of time being held sacred, and one day in seven a sacred day. Yet some convenience at the time may have regulated the number. Some refer it to the number of nations of which the Hellenistic Jews would at this time be composed. Some, to the total number

of believers, say seven thousand. ¶ *Of honest report*. Lit., *testified to, witnessed of*, "well reported of." See 10: 22; 16: 2; Heb. 11: 2, 39. So, "a bishop must be a man of *good report*," (1 Tim. 5: 10.) It is not honesty that is insisted on, but a pure character and eminent Christian service, (implying honesty.) ¶ *Full of the Holy Ghost*. This phraseology is several times used, and in regard to high spiritual gifts and also miraculous powers, (ch. 2: 4; 4: 8.) ¶ *Wisdom*. Not only distinguished piety, but *wisdom*, also, is a necessary qualification for this office: that practical sagacity, good sense, and sound judgment, which are requisite for the administration of the temporal affairs of a Church, and especially the wisdom that is from above, directing in all emergencies. The two former qualifications are the same as are prescribed for *bishops* or *elders*, (1 Tim. 3: 2, 7.) See vs. 5. ¶ *Whom we may appoint*. Rather, *may constitute*. There is no emphatic pronoun *WE*, here used, in contrast with *YE*, in the former clause; as is found in vs. 4, "*WE* will give ourselves," &c. Hence it would seem that the constituting here spoken of is to be done by the Church—Apostles and members jointly. This would agree well with the record in vs. 6. Ordination to a sacred office is to be done not by the ministry alone, but also by the representatives of the people, who are joint rulers in the Church. This record is specially important, as showing us the principle of such procedure. ¶ *Business*. Lit., *necessity, duty*, or necessary business. The object was to have a set of men who should be charged with this particular duty, leaving the Apostles to their appropriate work.—There should be deacons in every Church.

4. *But we*. We, Apostles, as distin-

5 ¶ And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, <sup>g</sup>a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and <sup>h</sup>Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and <sup>i</sup>Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: <sup>g</sup>ch. 11: 24.  
 6 Whom they set before the apostles: and <sup>k</sup>when they had prayed, <sup>h</sup>they laid *their* hands on them. <sup>h</sup>ch. 8: 5, 26, and 21: 8. <sup>i</sup>Rev. 2: 6-15. <sup>k</sup>ch. 1: 24. <sup>l</sup>ch. 8: 17, and 9: 17, and 13: 3. <sup>m</sup>1 Tim. 4: 14, and 5: 22. <sup>n</sup>2 Tim. 1: 6.

guished from *ye*, the brethren—the people. *We, for our part.* ¶ *Will give ourselves continually.* This is one word in the Greek, and means, *steadfastly adhere to.* Rom. 12: 12; Col. 4: 2. ¶ *To prayer.* Not private prayer, merely, but here in the sense of *public worship*, (16: 13.) “Prayers,” says *Bengel*, also “are more powerful than the ministry of the word.” ¶ *Ministry, &c.* Dispensation of the revealed word—preaching of the gospel messages and doctrines. The same term used here as in vs. 1, is rendered “ministrations.” All these officers are *ministers* in the sense of *servants*. And the term in this connection is striking, as it implies that it is only a different kind of service in either case, whether it be *deacon* or *bishop*. OBSERVE.—In the Jewish synagogue, from which the Christian Church was modeled, there were such officers called *Parnasim* or *Pastors*, commonly *three*. See 1 Tim. 3: 8-10.

5. *The saying.* The discourse of the Apostles. ¶ *Pleased.* Literally, *Was pleasing in the sight of* (a Hebraism,) *the whole multitude*, or membership. There was no dissent in the meeting. They unanimously concurred in the direction of the Apostles, and proceeded accordingly. ¶ *They chose—Chose out of their number.* ¶ *Stephen, &c.* His name is first given, as most conspicuous in the coming history, (ch. 7,) one who proved himself all that is here narrated. ¶ *A man full of faith.* “*Wisdom*” is not mentioned here, but *faith*, as the root of wisdom and of all Christian virtues. See ch. 11: 24. ¶ *Philip.* This one is also noted in the subsequent history, and appears as an “evangelist,” (ch. 21: 8.) Nothing is said in the record of any call for preaching in connection with this office of deacon. But the contrary is all along implied. The Apostles would

adhere earnestly to this work of preaching, and just for this they claimed to be released from this secular business of the Church, which they would commit to deacons. It is observed that all the names here given are Greek names, and from this fact it has been inferred that they were all Hellenists, and chosen from this class, to satisfy the present complaint. Yet *Nicolas* is spoken of as a proselyte, as though all the rest were native Jews. Nothing can be positively inferred from their Greek names. The Apostles *Andrew* and *Philip*, had Greek names, though in the circumstances it seems likely that they were of the aggrieved party. *Nicolas* was not the founder of the sect of Nicolaitans. (Rev. 2: 6-15.) He was chosen as a man full of wisdom and of the Holy Ghost. The other four names we find nowhere else referred to.—Antioch was the birth place of the Gentile Church of Christ, ch. 11: 19-22, where the Disciples were first called Christians, ch. 11: 22.

6. *Whom they set.* The brethren—the members *set—set up*, (the same term as is rendered *appointed* in ch. 1: 23,) these seven. It denotes the presentation of these as the proper persons—looked out, selected, chosen from among them—as was directed, vs. 3. They recognize in this act the authority of the Apostles, and having proceeded as far as they could go, having done their part in the election, they bring forward the men of their choice for the Apostolic act necessary. ¶ *When they had prayed.* The Apostles prayed in connection with the laying on of hands. It properly belonged to any such official transaction, and recognized Christ as the Supreme authority and Head of the Church, the source of all power. ¶ *Laid their hands on them.* This practice was common in the Old Testament Church

<sup>m</sup> ch. 12:24, and  
19:20.  
Col. 1:6.

<sup>n</sup> John 12:42.

7 And <sup>m</sup> the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company <sup>n</sup> of the priests were obedient to the faith.

from the time of Moses. The leading idea was that of communication or transfer. *Guilt*, liability to punishment, was thus ceremonially transferred to the victim. Lev. 2:2; 8:13. It was also the ancient mode of conferring a blessing, Gen. 48:14; Matt. 19:13, or setting apart to office. Numb. 27:18. It was an outward sign, carrying in itself no efficacy, but used in the New Testament in cases of bodily healing to indicate that something was imparted. Matt. 6:5; 8:23; Luke 4:40. So also in imparting the Holy Spirit, ch. 8:17; 19:6, or both this and healing together, as ch. 9:17, or setting apart to office. (1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6; ch. 8:19.) Here it was plainly an authoritative ordination to this office. Though the deacons had been elected by the Church, they derived their commission and authority from Christ through the Apostles. And the laying on of their hands was a sign and symbol of this.

7. *The word of God.* The gospel increased in power, and in success and prevalence among men, ch. 12:24; 19:20. How far this was owing to the new movement in the Church just recorded, we are left to conjecture. The Apostles were certainly relieved thus of a great load, divisions were healed, increased efficiency was secured by the appointment of such good men to office, as appears in the labors of Stephen and Philip presently recorded. ¶ *The priests.* Over 4000 priests had returned from Babylon, and their number was much increased since that time. Though they were a persecuting class, the Spirit of God could convert them, and did. See Ezra 2:36-39. In the conversion of these sons of Levi, the prophecy of Malachi began to be fulfilled. Mal. 3:3. Their conversion is mentioned here as a remarkable instance of the increased power which attended the word. ¶ *Were obedient.* They gave in their adherence to the Gospel. This would serve to take away

the reproach of Christianity that it had only the lower classes for its adherents. And the conversion of this body of leaders, was one of the ways in which the Great Head of the Church was preparing for its further extension soon after. See chap. 8:1. OBSERVE.—“This was the period when the Church at Jerusalem seems to have attained its highest popularity and power. As yet all seemed going on very prosperously for the conversion of Israel. The multitude honored the Apostles—the advice of Gamaliel had moderated the opposition of the Sanhedrim—the priests were gradually being won over. But God’s designs were far different. At this period, another great element in the testimony of the Church is brought out in the person of Stephen, its protest against Pharisaism. This arrays against it that powerful and zealous sect: and henceforward it finds neither favor nor tolerance with either of the parties among the Jews, but increasing and bitter enmity from them both.”—*Alford.*

§ 11. THE FIRST MARTYR—STEPHEN—GENERAL PERSECUTION AND DISPERSION. *Jerusalem.* Ch. 6:8 to Ch. 8.

The object of the historian is to show the steps by which the Infant Church had its advancement and increase. This further organization in the appointment of deacons to meet the necessities of the growing body, was attended with signal results, through the agency of one of these officers, whose name is given first on the list, and who was the leading man among them. We stand now on the eve of the great crisis in the history. The position taken by Stephen accords with that of Luke in his Gospel narrative, and with that of Paul in the Acts and Epistles—the position of universality and progress in the Church of Christ—that it is designed to extend to the Gentiles as on a level with the Jews

8 And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

9 ¶ Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called *the synagogue* of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen.

This leads him into a discussion. As a Hellenist, he was looked upon by the strict native Jews as having some tendency to Gentilism, from cultivating the language and society of foreigners. But he roused the ardent opposition of the Hellenists; yet this was God's plan, that by means of this Hellenistic element His religion should overflow the ancient banks. Stephen's ministry among the Hellenists probably brought him into collision with their Hellenistic relatives and friends.

8. *Full of faith*, &c. The Wiclif version reads, "*Full of grace and strength*," and the weight of critical authority seems in favor of the word *χάριτος*, "*grace*," rather than *πίστεως*, "*faith*." The former word points to the source of his special gifts, of which the latter was one, viz. miraculous power—by which he wrought great wonders and miracles among the people. In the exercise of his office as deacon he was brought into contact with all classes of the community, especially the sick and afflicted. This would be a proper sphere for the working of miracles as of healing. The terms here used are *τέρατα*, "*wonders*," prodigies, and *σημεία*, "*signs*," (miracles,) while the term rendered "*power*" is that commonly used for *miracles*. This miraculous power had hitherto been confined to the Apostles, so far as the record is concerned—and though Stephen was charged with ministering to the temporal wants of the people, he could not fail to exercise his spiritual gifts. Indeed, though he was, in the circumstances, an extraordinary deacon, as the Apostles were extraordinary ministers, the deacon's field of labor among the needy and distressed and bereaved, is one most eligible for spiritual ministrations. Neither does it need that one be ordained to the sacred office in order to be a dispenser

of Gospel truth in connection with such ministrations of mercy. They who would help the body, if they are true *Christians*, "*full of faith*"—will seek also to help the soul.

9. *There arose*. Some of the synagogue, &c., rose up in opposition to Stephen. There were in Jerusalem a large number and variety of synagogues. Jews from foreign parts who came to reside or worship at Jerusalem had their own synagogues—some of which are named here—or they had founded them, or were chief in influence among them. Those from Cyrene had a "*synagogue of the Cyrenians*," with whom perhaps the Alexandrians were united, as from the same quarter of Africa—or they may have formed a separate synagogue; while the Cilicians and those from proconsular Asia, had another. So it came to pass that there were 460 or 480 synagogues in Jerusalem about that time. ¶ *The Libertines*. These were probably Jewish freedmen from Rome, who had been taken captive by Pompey and afterwards manumitted with the privilege of retaining their religion. They were assigned a district by themselves beyond the Tiber, and the Jews are still restricted to a wretched quarter of the city called the *Ghetto*. From Tacitus we learn that Tiberius banished these Jews from Rome on account of their religion. It was natural that many of these refugees should resort to Jerusalem. ¶ *Cyrenians*. Simon of Cyrene, who bore the cross of Christ to the crucifixion, was one of this class of Jews. ¶ *Alexandrians*. The multitude of Jews at Alexandria (Philo says *one million*) was such that they occupied two of the five quarters or districts of the city. It was indeed the metropolis of the Hellenists; and here they had called for the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek nearly

• Luke 24:15.  
ch. 5:39.  
See Ex. 4:12.  
Isa. 54:17.  
p 1 Kings 21:  
10, 13.  
Matt. 26:59, 60.

10 And •they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.

11 • Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.

12 And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council,

13 And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth

300 years before Christ. ¶ *Cilicia.* This was the province of Asia Minor to which Tarsus, Paul's birth-place, belonged, and it is inferred, of course, that he was one of this synagogue, ch. 7: 58. There were either three synagogues or five, of these here mentioned. ¶ *Disputing.* The term denotes "*seeking together*," implying mutual antagonism—well expressed by the word *disputing, debating*. ¶ *With Stephen.* He was conspicuous for his labors, and the narrative leads us to the great event of his martyrdom.

10. *They were not able.* Rather—*They did not prevail to withstand the wisdom and the (Holy) Spirit* (vs. 3,) *by which* (under whose inspiration) *he spake.* Stephen here had fulfilled to him the promise in Luke 21:15: "I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

11. From this verse we infer the real subject of dispute, and the character of Stephen's arguments. He set forth boldly the nature of the Old Testament system as a religion of the future, and as incomplete in itself; as pointing always to the New Testament fulfillment, and therefore shadowy and transitory—ready to merge into the substance. ¶ *Suborned.* They—the Hellenists—unfairly procured false witnesses, whom they privately instructed to give their false testimony. ¶ *Blasphemous words.* They accused him of blasphemy against Moses because he declared that the Mosaic system was inferior to the Christian, and preparatory to it, and that the ritual was near its end. Stephen is guilty of no such thing. On the contrary he makes a faithful exposition of the Old Testament system, and sets it forth in

its true nature and intent. ¶ *Against God.* As God had given to Israel the Mosaic institutions, they insisted that Stephen's doctrine of their inferiority and dissolution was a blasphemy against God, (see vs. 14,) and came within the scope of the law against blasphemy, Deut. 13: 6-10. It was on this charge that the Jews pronounced Jesus worthy of death, Matt. 26: 60.

12. *They stirred up.* This term denotes a commotion which is not at any impulse of right reason. The agitators here referred to, are the Hellenists and not the witnesses. They are spoken of again in vs. 13, in a way to make this clear. They stirred up first of all *the people*, so as to excite a popular tumult and thus act upon the Sanhedrim. It was among the multitude that Stephen wrought, (vs. 8,) and it was probably the danger of his carrying them away by his wondrous works that led to this counter movement. Up to this time *the people* had on the whole remained well disposed toward the Church and its leaders, ch. 2: 43, 47; 3: 10; 4: 21; 5: 11. ¶ *And the elders.* They stirred up the leaders of the people also—the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Came upon him.* Literally, *Coming upon him*—unawares and violently; while he was engaged in his work, as would appear from the term here used. They seem now to be acting under the authority of the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Caught him*—*Seized him.* The opposers of Stephen, (vs. 9,) together with the false witnesses and people, and such of the Sanhedrim as they had won over to their interest. ¶ *Brought him to (into) the council*—the Sanhedrim.

13. *Set up.* They formally brought forward into the council, (before the

not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:

14 ¶ For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of <sup>q ch. 25: 8.</sup> Nazareth shall <sup>r Dan. 9: 26.</sup> destroy this place, and shall change the <sup>|| Or, rites.</sup> customs which Moses delivered us.

15 And all that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.

court) the persons suborned, (vs. 11.) ¶ *False witnesses.* Their testimony was false as regards the construction put upon Stephen's words. It was a malicious perversion of his meaning, just as in case of our Lord where such suborned false witnesses perverted His words about the temple. (Matt. 26: 60, 61.) ¶ *Ceaseth not.* This was intended to exaggerate the case. And now instead of blasphemy "against Moses and God" (vs. 11,) being charged, it is against this *holy place and the law*—that is, against *the temple*, because he said it was of temporary use, and against the ceremonial law, because he said it was to vanish away. See ch. 4: 11; 5: 27. The next verse explains.

14. They now pretend to give his words. ¶ *This Jesus of Nazareth.* *Jesus, this Nazarene*—(a term of contempt.) See Mark 16: 6. This implies that Jesus was He whom Stephen set forth, and whose predictions he cited. He probably repeated such of Christ's prophecies as in Matt. 24; Luke 21. See John 4: 21. These accusers represented him as declaring that Jesus would Himself destroy the temple, though this had not been said. ¶ *The customs that Moses delivered us.* The ceremonial rites and institutions were indeed changed by the destruction of the temple. Heb. 12: 27, 28; 8: 13; Matt. 17: 1. The false witnesses allege this same thing against our Lord, "This fellow saith, I am able to destroy the temple of God." Matt. 26: 61. Jesus had predicted the destruction of the temple, but it was to be by the Gentiles. The Mosaic system was to pass away under the influence of Christianity, but only as the shadow merges into the substance. They perverted Stephen's words as though he

had represented the old economy as essentially hostile to the new, and as to be overturned by violence. He had undoubtedly "taught, as Paul afterwards did, that the Christian dispensation was superior to that of Moses"—that the Gospel was designed to supersede Judaism—that the law was unavailing as a ground of justification, and that henceforth true worship would be as acceptable to God in one place as in another. His accusers availed themselves of the popular religious prejudice to put a construction on his words which would provoke the bitterest opposition.

15. Just at this stage of their hostility, the record is here made of Stephen's most remarkable appearance, as observed by all the members of the council. ¶ *Looking stedfastly on him*—gazing intently upon him. This was doubtless something more than any benign and meek expression of the man. It was like the shining of Moses' face—a mark of the Divine favor and of personal communion with God, Exod. 34: 29, 30. And it is more clear from ch. 7: 55, that the remarkable angelic glory of his countenance was preternatural. ¶ *As it had been*—*As if* (it had been). See Luke 2: 9; ch. 12: 7. His face was lighted up with a divine radiance. The mildness of the high priest's question, (ch. 7: 1,) indicates some such influence over him as this aspect may be supposed to have had. This was the preternatural effect of the Spirit of Jesus, which filled with heavenly light the very features of the first martyr, in the hour of his last and greatest need. It was a witness for Christ against His enemies, and for the consolation of His friends.

## CHAPTER VII.

1 THEN said the high priest, Are these things so?

## CHAPTER VII.

THIS DEFENSE OF STEPHEN seems, at first view, to be mainly a condensed recital of the Jewish history, from the time of Abraham to the Temple. This would be conciliatory so far as it would show his knowledge of their annals, and his interest in them, as well as his belief in God's covenant relation to the people, which he everywhere puts forward. The facts, also, they could not deny. But, in this simple and summary statement of the truth, we find so much that makes for his great doctrine of universality, that we suppose him to have had this all along in view, though he does not roughly obtrude it upon them at the outstart. The accusation brought against him (vs. 13,) furnished the clew to his defense. Of course, his immediate object must be to repel the charge of "blasphemy against Moses and the law, and against the temple, and against God." He shows a plain course of development in all the history, with changes in the path of progress—changes in the institutions of God's worship, from altars to tabernacle and temple. From the calling of Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant, to the temple, he shows a development not of any organic and independent life, as though Judaism could develop of itself into Christianity, any more than a shadow has life in itself which grows into the substance; but a development all along of God's purpose. And now he goes on to show that, according to a most consistent plan, and according to the prophecies, as of Isaiah, (so also of Malachi, &c.,) the whole scheme looked toward the *universality* of the Church, and that God could not be confined to the Temple, and that an exclusive locality was not contemplated as the highest glory of His worship. He shows, therefore, in all the prominent periods of their history, that God did not confine Himself to the Holy Land, nor to the tem-

ple, but appeared to Abraham in *Mesopotamia*, to Joseph and Israel in *Egypt*, to Moses in the *wilderness of Sinai*, and through him to the nation in all the history of the Exodus and entrance to Canaan, when the Church *was in the wilderness*—when the shifting tabernacle there was the place of God's presence and worship, until Solomon built Him an house—so that the TEMPLE that they boasted was a modern thing in the history of the nation. Hence (1) God's glorious appearances to their fathers were outside of the Holy Land, and before the temple had an existence. Even Moses was before the temple, and the promise was before the law, while Moses prophesied of a greater Prophet than he. (2) God, by His prophet Isaiah, expressly declares, in distinct reference to this very *transition period* at which they had now arrived, that He is not to be confined to any exclusive locality, (Isaiah 66 : 1, 2.)—But, OBSERVE.—This entire narrative is interwoven with most striking instances of their national disobedience and rebellion. And he means to show them that just as their fathers rebelled against Moses, the Old Testament lawgiver, mediator, and leader, whom they now professed to boast, so they, in the same spirit, were found rebelling against Christ, vs. 25, vs. 39, vs. 51. He shows, also, that "the law was only an additional element in the fulfillment of the promise then made," (See Rom. 5 : 20; Gal. 3 : 19,) and only a step by the way. [Some have puzzled themselves to inquire how Luke could possibly have had a report of Stephen's speech before the council. But it is plain that Saul of Tarsus, who was present, was deeply impressed with it, as we find him afterwards using the very same drift of argument. See ch. 7 : 24; Galat. 3 : 19; Heb. 8 : 5. Besides, many of the priests had now recently become converts to the faith. Yet if neither of these sources existed, the Holy Spirit could and would commu-

2 And he said, \*Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; \* ch. 22:1.  
The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham,  
when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,

nicate it to Luke for the purposes of this inspired revelation.] OBSERVE.—“Stephen traces the history of Israel from its very beginning to the highest climax that it reached in the Old Testament. And since three periods are to be found therein—the times of the Patriarchs, (vss. 2-16,) the times of Moses, (vss. 17-45,) and the times of David and Solomon, (vss. 46-50,) he brings out of each of these periods those points and events which, in contrast with the Jewish prejudices that Stephen had to combat, would set the relation between God and His people in their true light.

1. *The high priest*—who presided in the Sanhedrim. As Caiaphas in the trial of our Lord, so his successor now in this same court, is proceeding to compass the violent death of the first martyr. They had felt awhile quite satisfied with the death of Jesus, as giving a death blow to His religion. But they see it making such progress and distinguishing itself by such wonderful works that they can rest no longer. ¶ *Are these things so?* This is milder language than that used toward Christ, Matt. 26:62, and this may be accounted for from the angelic lustre of Stephen's countenance at this moment. The formula, however, is equivalent to the question of *Guilty or not guilty?*

1. Stephen gives here his HISTORY OF REDEMPTION, beginning with the PERIOD OF THE PATRIARCHS, vss. 2-16.

2. *Men, &c. Men, (who are) brethren and fathers*, as “Men, Galileans,” &c. He addressed the bystanders as “brethren,” and the court as “fathers,” according to the Hebrew custom. So Paul, ch. 22:1. ¶ *The God of glory*. He means to show by this title “that God's relation to Israel depended purely on the absolute free grace of God.” How at once this reverent language must put to the blush their

charge of blasphemy! The God, Jehovah, who in the Shechinah manifested forth His glory, in the symbol of His visible presence. See Exod. 24:16; 25:24; 40:34; Isa. 6:3; Psalms 24:7-10, for the sense of the term. ¶ *Our father*. How could he be a blasphemer of their ancient institution, when so faithfully he calls Abraham “our father.” Matt. 3:9. He begins with the calling of the father of their nation; for the narrative is to set forth the successive steps of God's dealings toward them under the Abrahamic covenant. The term rendered *appeared*, refers to a vision. Stephen recites the outline of their history, as it was recited in their triumphal Psalms. See Ps. 105. ¶ *Mesopotamia*. The vision is not recorded, but implied, as it is said that God brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees. Gen. 11:31; 15:7; Neh. 9:7. The region between the rivers Tigris and Euphrates is known as Mesopotamia, and Ur is spoken of by secular authors as in this region. The geographical boundaries were not always very distinctly defined. This precise locality is now unknown. In Gen. 12:1, Abram is said to have been called after he dwelt in Haran. But the inference is that he had two calls. Certain it is that God commanded Abram to remove from Ur, and more specially called him afterwards. Though from Gen. 11:31, it would seem that Terah took Abram his son and removed of his own accord, yet this was in obedience to the Divine plan, and does not disprove such a command. ¶ *Dwelt—abode—settled*. ¶ *Charran. Haran*. It is also in Mesopotamia, 150 miles from Ur, in the north-west. Here Terah died. Gen. 11:32. Jacob retired hither when he fled from Esau. Gen. 27:43. It is located in a sandy plain among hills and inhabited by a few Arabs for the delicious water. It was called Carræ by the Greeks and Ro-



<sup>b</sup> Gen. 12:1. 3 And said unto him, <sup>b</sup> Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 11:31, and 12:4, 5. 4 Then <sup>c</sup> came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell.

5 And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not *so much as to*

mans, and was famous for the defeat of Crassus by the Parthians.

3. *Get thee out, &c.* This is not quite the same language as is used in the call at Haran, (see Gen. 12:1,) where he is commanded to leave also his father's house. His countrymen and his kindred were idolaters. Josh. 24:2. Though Terah went with him as far as Haran, yet Abram was to go away from his relatives to a farther and unknown land. ¶ *Come.* Literally, *hither*—an adverb of command. ¶ *To the land.* Literally, *To a land which-ever I shall show to thee*—most indefinite, and therefore requiring most implicit faith. So, in Heb. 11:8, it is said “he went out not knowing whither he went.”

4. *Land of the Chaldeans.* From Ur of the Chaldees. Genesis 11:31. ¶ *When (after) his father was dead.* A difficulty has been started here, since Terah died at Haran at the age of 205, (Gen. 11:32.) Yet if Terah is to be understood as having been only 70 years old at Abram's birth, (Gen. 11:26,) he must have been only 145 years old when he died, since Abram was 75 years old when he left Haran. But it is not said in Gen. 11:26, nor anywhere else, that Terah was only 70 at Abram's birth. But it is said that Terah was 70 years old and he begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. That is, he lived 70 years before he begat either of these. And then Abram is mentioned first, on account of his prominence in the history, though he was not the eldest but the youngest of the three. This is acknowledged by Jews themselves. Besides, Sarah, Abram's wife, was the daughter of Haran, as Josephus relates, and as is generally granted, and he was but ten years old when Sarah was

born, Gen. 17:17, and Milcah, Nahor's wife, was probably older than she. Gen. 11:25-29. Hence, Haran was a father before Abram was 9 years of age. Abram was easily 60 years younger than Haran, and Terah would then be 130 years old instead of 70, at the birth of Abram, which would bring him to 205, the date of his death, when Abram was 75 years old, at his departure to Canaan. So the sons of *Noah* are given as Shem, Ham and Japhet, but the last named was the *eldest*. Others explain it by making Terah to have lived 60 years after Abram left Haran, and that God did not actually “remove him into the land” of Canaan till 60 years after, but that he sojourned in Egypt and dwelt in tents in Judea during these threescore years before he was fixed in Hebron. The former is the better explanation. *Biscoe on Acts*, vol. 2, p. 600. It is idle to suppose that Stephen made a blunder in these familiar facts of the history. Yet even if he did, it would be nothing against the inspiration of the Scripture, since it was Luke's object to give a correct report of Stephen's discourse, as he proposes to do. ¶ *Removed him.* Stephen recognizes here the second call of Abram at Haran. ¶ *Wherein. With-in which ye now abide—dwell.*

5. *None inheritance.* This was the relation of Abraham, their covenant father, to the Holy Land—only very gradually getting into possession of it. First was his call in Ur, (vss. 2, 3,) then his removal to Haran, (vs. 4,) then his father's death in Haran, so that in this covenant relation he was to be regarded as separate from his father, (vs. 4.) Then his journey to Canaan, (vs. 4,) and now the remarkable fact that God gave him not the least

set his foot on: "yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."

6 And God spake on this wise, "That his seed should sojourn in a strange land: and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat *them* evil 'four hundred years."

inheritance in the land of Canaan, (vs. 5.) Then follows the fact of his living there childless, (vs. 5,) his prospect of the 400 years of oppression for his posterity, (vs. 6,) his own circumcision, (vs. 8,) and then the birth of Isaac, (vs. 8,) and his circumcision, (vs. 8.) ¶ *To set his foot on.* That is, *A foot-breadth—a footing.* (A proverbial expression.) Abraham sojourned as a stranger in the Holy Land, though it was promised to him—"dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise." For he was put upon his faith, and his religion looked to the future for a realization of its hopes. So the whole Jewish system was a *religion of the future*—pointing forward and waiting to be fulfilled in the New Testament dispensation. True, Abraham bought a burial place for his dead, (Gen. 23: 20,) yet this was only a proof that he had no inheritance in the land as yet, while it was an expression of his confidence that he should afterwards inherit it; wherefore he would bury his dead there, where his posterity would certainly live. ¶ *Yet.* Though it was not given to him in possession, it was given to him by *promise*, calling for the exercise of faith. So that even their covenant father Abraham had no personal interest given him by God in the land of Canaan except what he could lay hold of by faith. See Heb. 11. ¶ *To his seed.* It was a covenant grant to his *posterity*, and this was while he had as yet no child! So gradual was the accomplishment—so slow was the full opening of the promise. So entirely was it all along a training for the exercise of faith.

6. But there was still another step in this same direction. Though the land was promised by covenant to his posterity, it was soon made known to

him that that posterity (of which he had not yet any child) should first sojourn in a strange land and be treated as slaves 400 years. This was another item in the same series of delays and disappointments by which God would exercise the patriarch's faith, and develop His own gracious plan and purpose toward His covenant people. All this history, too, was to be outside of Canaan, in "a strange land." This, too, was altogether aside from Mosaic rites and temple worship, which had not yet been instituted. See Paul's reasoning to the same effect, Gal. 3: 17. "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness," Rom. 4: 9. ¶ *Strange land*—foreign, not their own—Egypt, and not Canaan. ¶ *They.* The people of the strange land—Egyptians—*should bring them into bondage*—make slaves of them, as the Egyptians made slaves of the Israelites, Exod. 1: 11. ¶ *Entreat them evil.* Literally, *injure, abuse them*: as they did under the task-masters. ¶ *Four hundred years.* This period is thought by some to be given in round numbers for 430. In Exod. 12: 40, the period of 430 years is given as "the sojourning of Israel who dwelt in Egypt." In Gen. 15: 13, their affliction there is given as 400 years. Paul in Gal. 3: 17, speaks of the whole time from the time of the promise till the giving of the law, as 430 years. Now it is not said in Exod. 12: 40, that they dwelt 430 years in Egypt, but that the *sojourning of the children of Israel who dwell in Egypt* was of this duration. This peculiar form of expression allows us to understand by it, all their sojourning from Abraham's entrance into Canaan, since

7 And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God : and after that shall they come forth, and <sup>a</sup>serve me in this place.

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 3:12.

<sup>b</sup> Gen. 17:9, 10, 11.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 21:2, 3, 4.

<sup>d</sup> Gen. 25:26.

<sup>e</sup> Gen. 29:31, &c. and 30:5, &c. and 35:18-23.

8 <sup>b</sup>And he gave him the covenant of circumcision : <sup>c</sup>and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day ; <sup>d</sup>and Isaac begat Jacob ; and <sup>e</sup>Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

a leading portion of it was the sojourn in Egypt. And this agrees with the other passages. It should be observed, however, that Abraham at first passed directly through Canaan and sojourned in Egypt on account of the famine. So that the whole period from the Promise to the Exodus, is fairly included. From the time of this first sojourn of the patriarch in Egypt, that land was the main source of their affliction. Josephus thus explains the facts. And the Samaritan text and the Septuagint version both add, "And in the land of Canaan."

7. *The nation.* The Egyptians especially. ¶ *Judge.* Execute judgment against them—visit them with punishment—as the plagues. ¶ *Said God.* He refers them to the passage, Gen. 15: 14, where these words are found. ¶ *And serve me—Worship me.* This last clause is not found in the original passage—but simply "*shall they come out with great substance.*" In Exod. 3: 12, however, it is found in the promise to Moses. "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain, Horeb." So in Gen. 15: 16, it is impliedly contained in the words "they shall return hither." Stephen seems to intimate by this coupling of the promise to Abraham with that of Moses, that the latter was virtually involved in the former, and that though already in Abraham's time this prospect was held out, yet the fulfillment was delayed through a long interval and by such difficult processes. Still it was an exercise of *faith*—under a religion of the *future*—and the covenant people was for the most part outside of the Holy Land. All along, this is yet the drift of Stephen's argument.

8. *The covenant of circumcision.* This

was still another stage of the development. In Gen. 17: 11, Stephen, showing that the God of glory, in His free grace, orders and carries on this entire development, says here, that God gave to Abraham this covenant, the seal of which was circumcision; which seal was given as a distinctive sign, setting apart the covenant people, Gen. 17: 2-8. This God did in His gracious majesty and glory—Himself appointing all the particulars; and how then is He to be held bound to any given locality or to any law of development such as they chose to prescribe? ¶ *And so.* That is, *accordingly*—being in covenant as a federal head—Abraham begat Isaac, who, as the son of promise, was given by God, and he performed the rite of circumcision, as directed. See Gal. 3. **OBSERVE.**—The term for *covenant*, meaning *arrangement, disposal of anything*; also *testament*, as applied to one's last will and bequest of goods, Heb. 9: 16, 17, denotes a compact between parties. The first stage of the covenant with Abraham, was God's stipulation (Gen. ch. 15,) for Himself. The second stage was the prescribing of the seal of circumcision as binding Abraham and his seed. Gen. ch. 17. The point which Stephen would make here, is that Isaac and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs were born under this covenant established with Abraham when he was yet in uncircumcision. See Rom. 4: 11-16, where Paul makes the same point as his forerunner here, to prove the same thing—the possibility in God's plan of grace, that the blessings of the covenant should extend to the uncircumcised; and that it was not circumcision and ceremonial sanctity—not holy places and rites—that were essential with God; but the faith, as of our

9 "And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph <sup>m Gen. 37:4, 11:28. Ps. 105:17. n Gen. 39:2, 21</sup> into Egypt: "but God was with him,

10 And delivered him out of all his afflictions, "and <sup>23. o Gen. 41:37 and 42:6.</sup> gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house.

11 "Now there came a dearth over all the land of <sup>p Gen. 41:54.</sup>

father Abraham, Rom. 4:12. ¶ *The twelve patriarchs.* The term means the head, beginning or founder of a family—then of the tribes.

9. In this development of the Divine and gracious plan, another item is now noted in the history of *Joseph*. He shows how God develops His Church all along by allowing affairs to come to a crisis, and then interposing for deliverance and so carrying it forward to the purposed advance. He would show thus from all this familiar history of the Church, that all along there is progress—a further unfolding of God's purpose—so that they could reasonably look for a change now in the present state of things, and not insist on it as being immutable.

¶ *Moved with envy.* With this main drift of argument, he carries along the idea of the unfaithfulness and wickedness of the covenant people as instanced in this case of the great majority—all the eleven patriarchs against *one*. By this he means to hold up the idea of their cruelty and treachery to Jesus, the *New Testament Joseph*. ¶ *Moved with envy.* Literally, *having envied Joseph, sold him into Egypt*, Gen. 45:4. ¶ *But.* Literally, *and*—as part of the same course of providential unfolding. ¶ *God was with him*—interposed against his treacherous brethren—as now in the case of Jesus against their successors—the Jewish people. And this presence of God with him was not restricted to the Holy Land, but it was in *Egypt*. Thus all along, Stephen makes good his points.

10. *And delivered him, &c.* So Christ, the *New Testament Joseph*, was delivered. See Ps. 22. ¶ *Out of all his afflictions—tribulations—straits.* ¶ *Favour and wisdom.* It is remarkable that

these are the very same terms used of Jesus, in Luke 2:52, "Jesus increased in *wisdom* and in *favour* with God and man." God gave to Joseph both these—the wisdom to interpret dreams and so to conduct himself as every way to gain favor, Gen. 41:38. ¶ *In the sight of.* Literally, *over against—in presence of*, and notwithstanding his first opposition. ¶ *King of Egypt.* A foreign lord. ¶ *He made him—constituted, appointed.* This may be understood of God or of Pharaoh. But the same subject being continued, it is natural to understand it of God, and thus it expresses the Divine agency in the whole matter. ¶ *Governor—leader—prime minister.* ¶ *Over Egypt.* Joseph's exaltation was thus outside of the Holy Land, and it was part of God's covenant plan of redemption to exalt Joseph to this dignity and authority not in Judea but in Egypt. ¶ *Over all his house.* That is, *Pharaoh's*. This is the designation of an Oriental prime minister or vizier. The house is the court or palace, whence all the legislative judicial and executive acts of the government go forth. *ON-SERVE.*—As in the case of Joseph, the envy of the house of Israel had conspired to betray Jesus into the hands of His enemies. Yet He meets with that reception and devotion among strangers (Gentiles) that He had not found in His own house, (John 1:11, 12.) May not then this *New Testament Joseph*, like the *Old Testament one*, as a son in the house, be superior to Moses, (Heb. 3:3,) and change the customs and ordinances, (ch. 6:14.) See Gen. 47:13-27. See the 105th Psalm.

11. Here another stage in the history is noted as part of the same plan of providential development in the case of the covenant people.

Egypt and Chanaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance.

¶ Gen. 42: 1. 12 <sup>a</sup> But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first.

¶ Gen. 45: 4-16. 13 <sup>r</sup> And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh.

¶ Gen. 45: 9-27.  
¶ Gen. 46: 27.  
Deut. 10: 22. 14 <sup>s</sup> Then sent Joseph and called his father Jacob to him, and 'all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls.

¶ Gen. 46: 5.  
¶ Gen. 49: 33.  
Ex. 1: 6. 15 <sup>u</sup> So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers.

*There occurred a dearth (famine) (Gen. 41: 54,) over (upon) the whole land.*

¶ *Our fathers.* This expression is used to keep before their minds the fact that it is the continuous progressive history of the covenant people which he narrates, and in whom he with them is interested, and that the plan of that dispensation is such as has an analogy in the ADVANCE THROUGH CONFLICT from Judaism to Christianity. ¶ *No sustenance—provisions—* properly for cattle—and by implication much less for men.

12. *But. Jacob having heard, &c.*

¶ *Corn.* Grain in general—breadstuff.

¶ *Sent out. Sent away,* as to a distance and with urgency. ¶ *Our fathers.*

The same covenant leaders as are spoken of before, (vs. 11,) whose history is traced to show the design and plan throughout; and the analogy of dealing as vindicating Stephen's doctrine. ¶ *First.* The first time is noticed to prepare for a *second* time, when the special event took place.

13. This recognition and reunion was not brought about on the first visit, but on the *second*. This is noted to show the gradual method of development, under the one Divine directing mind. ¶ *Made known.* Rather, *was made known again—recognized—* after estrangement and forgetfulness. ¶ *Kindred.* Literally, *the race of Joseph become manifest*—the fact of their arrival and their presence there, Gen. 45: 16. This is the progressive unfolding.

14. Literally, *And Joseph having sent, called for his father Jacob and all his kindred, (or family,) (in all) seventy-five*

*souls.* The object is to show that this small number became in Egypt a great nation. But only *sixty-six* of Jacob's descendants went down into Egypt, Gen. 46: 26. But in Gen. 46: 27, there are added to these, Jacob himself, Joseph and his two sons; making the total seventy. But in this vs. 27, the Greek (Septuagint) adds: "And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were nine souls," which number added to the sixty-six would make seventy-five. This was the reckoning in their familiar version—and it was true in the sense intended—that Jacob and all his family consisted of seventy-five souls. Now in Gen. 46: 27, it is said that "the sons of Joseph" were among "the souls of the house of Jacob" that came into Egypt with him—the descendants being regarded as already existing in their progenitor. We cannot tell precisely on what details the reckoning is founded, but it was current among the Jews, as their Greek version shows; and it is not supposable that Stephen made any blunder here. His object was to show that this FAMILY, who, at the utmost calculation, consisted of only seventy-five persons, became a **great** NATION in Egypt.

15. *So. Rather, And, or but—* as indicating the crisis in the history—the death of Jacob and the patriarchs—and that this was in Egypt, also, outside of the Holy Land, though it is especially to be noted that they were buried in the land of promise, through the same faith in the future possession of that land by their posterity as

16 And \*were carried over into Sychem, and laid in <sup>Ex. 12:19.</sup> the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money <sup>Josh. 24:32.</sup> of the sons of Emmor <sup>Gen. 23:16.</sup> *the father* of Sychem. <sup>and 33:19.</sup>

Abraham exercised in purchasing a burial-place there for his dead. ¶ *Our fathers.* This phrase is again repeated, for the third time in this narrative, to show that it is the history of their covenant ancestors—in which they were all interested; and that this is the law of gradual development in the redemption of the chosen race.

16. *Were carried over.* *They*—that is, “*our fathers*,” not including Jacob, who is separated from the rest in the preceding context. “*He died*, and our fathers, and *they were carried over* into Sychem.” Jacob was buried in the sepulchre of Abraham at Macpelah, Gen. 49: 30; 50: 13, which was in Hebron, Gen. 23: 19. It is expressly recorded that the bones of Joseph were carried over from Egypt into Canaan, and buried in Shechem. The place of burial of the rest of the patriarchs is not elsewhere recorded; but we have every reason to suppose that Stephen knew the facts, and that if he had stated incorrectly he would have been contradicted by those who must have known. Jerome asserts that the tombs of the patriarchs were still to be seen at Shechem.—*Epist.* 86, A. D. 389. ¶ *Sychem.* The Greek form of the Hebrew word Shechem, also called *Sychar*, and now known as *Neapolis*, *Nablous*. ¶ *Abraham bought.* There is a difficulty here. Jacob bought this land, Gen. 33: 19; Josh. 24: 32, but Abraham bought the sepulchre at Hebron, Gen. 23: 3-20. Both are briefly referred to, and some understand that as the facts were so familiar to those whom he addressed, and must have been perfectly well known to Stephen, he meant to have them supply what was left out. “*Jacob was laid in the sepulchre bought by Abraham*,” and “*our fathers*” in that bought “*of the sons of Emmor*,” &c. Others hold that as the difficulty lies in a single word, which ought to be read *Jacob* for *Abraham*, it is much easier to suppose that it was the mistake of an early

copyist than that Stephen made such a needless mistake, and that there should have been several mistakes in one verse. This, indeed, is absolutely un-supposable, considering the notoriety of the facts in question, and Stephen's admitted familiarity with all (such leading) items of the Jewish history. But Luke, as an inspired historian, was to give an accurate report of Stephen's discourse. So that even if Stephen committed an inadvertence or error, it would not impeach the accuracy of Luke's narrative. It is plain that such leading facts, such as any school-boy would have known, could not have been incorrectly given through any “*historical blunder*” of Stephen, especially as this is a discourse where the speaker shows the clearest, most discriminating views of the history. Stephen is plainly doing something more than to recite these common, well-known items of Old Testament history in a dry detail. He is insisting on certain great principles, which here lead him to group together certain kindred facts. Here he is speaking of the faith of the patriarchs as contrasted with the unbelief of after generations and of his own times, and in proof of this he advances this fact—their purchase of this land in Canaan as a burial-place for themselves and their posterity, in the confidence that the land should belong to their seed according to the promise. Of course, to establish this point he need not distinguish between their separate acts, but may group them in one. And especially as Abraham originated the whole matter of such purchase, he may be said to have done it in Jacob after him, who only followed in his steps and acted in the faith of his father Abraham. The ground at Sychem is thus regarded as virtually his purchase, just as Judas is said by Peter to have purchased the potter's field with the reward of iniquity, (ch. 1: 18,) when it was known to every child of the people that the chief priests actually pur

<sup>a</sup> Gen. 15:13  
vs. 6.  
<sup>a</sup> Ex. 1:7, 8, 9.  
Ps. 105:24, 25.

17 But when <sup>a</sup>the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, <sup>a</sup>the people grew and multiplied in Egypt,

chased it; but in the deeper sense of Peter, and in the view of his argument and discourse, Judas himself was to be considered as the purchaser. So here their father Abraham, as having originated this plan and having given the example of it in the purchase at Hebron for a sepulchre, is, in the sense of Stephen's argument, to be regarded as the purchaser of this field at Sychem—for the speaker was showing how the faith of the patriarchs was evidenced by their buying land in Canaan for a burial-place—so confident that the land would all come into possession of their posterity, according to the promise, that they arranged to have their bones deposited there. And it is expressly recorded of Abraham that he bought the land at Hebron for this *very purpose* of a burial-place, while this is not stated in regard to the purchase of Sychem by Jacob, only that "he bought a field," and afterwards that he was buried there, Josh. 24:32. Stephen, therefore, grouped the two transactions as, in his view, belonging to the same great work of patriarchal faith—and instead of blundering, which would be inconceivable, he has only taken the profounder, more comprehensive view of the whole. Stephen could not say, in strict historical exactness, that "*the sepulchre*" was bought by Jacob. "The field" was bought by him, (Gen. 33:19,) but *it was put to this use as a patriarchal sepulchre*, according to Abraham's example and by virtue of Abraham's faith. *This is the very point of his argument.* Stephen, therefore, is more historically correct than his skeptical critics would be. Besides, observe this very Sychem was the first place of which Abraham gained possession, and where Jehovah announced to him the covenant promise to give him the land, and where he raised an altar unto God, Gen. 12:6, 7. And that transaction was, indeed, the basis of the after purchase there for a burial-place. ¶ *Sum*

*of money*—one hundred pieces of money—some suppose about two hundred and fifty dollars. Lit., *silver price*. ¶ *Sons of Emmor*—Sons of Hamor, Gen. 33:19.

II. Stephen here reaches a SECOND PERIOD in his History of Redemption—the TIMES OF MOSES, vss. 17-45.

17. *But when.* Lit., *But as—according as.* Stephen now proceeds to another and (2d) prominent stage in the development of God's covenant plan—the history of MOSES, who, also, like Joseph, was a type of Christ. As the future deliverer of the ancient covenant people, *who had grown to be a nation not in the Holy Land, but in Egypt*, Moses was adopted by a foreign princess, (21,) raised in a foreign court, (21,) learned in all the wisdom of this foreign people, (22,) till, when he had reached his full maturity at forty years of age, he volunteered as the deliverer of his brethren, (24, 25,) but was refused as such, (35,) and forced to fly from the land for his life, (29,) until after forty years more, God appeared to him, not in any sacred spot of the land of promise, but in the wilderness of Sinai, (30,) in Arabia. Yet "the Church in the wilderness" (38,) was there—and God by this dealing shows that He is not bound to any nationality, nor tied to any special locality, but pursues the good pleasure of His own will, where, when, and how He pleases. This is altogether in the line of Stephen's argument, as we have seen. ¶ *Time of the promise.* The time referred to in the promise—the time for the fulfilling of the promise, (vs. 7,) when after the four hundred years of sojourning and bondage, Abraham's seed should come forth and serve God in the Holy Land of promise. ¶ *The people grew.* It was in God's plan to have the family grow into a nation by their separate location in Egypt for so long a period, which was at least two hundred and fifteen years. See **Exod.** 1:7-9.

18 Till another king arose, which knew not Joseph.

19 The same dealt subtilly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, <sup>b</sup> so that they cast out their young <sup>c Ex. 1. 22.</sup> children, to the end they might not live.

20 • In which time Moses was born, and <sup>d</sup> was || exceed- <sup>e Ex. 2: 2.</sup> <sup>d Heb. 11: 23.</sup> ing fair, and nourished up in his father's house three <sup>|| Or, fair to God.</sup> months:

18. *Till another king.* That is, they continued to increase up to this time, when a new king ascended the throne. This term "*until*" does not limit the time of their growth, but marks another item in the history. Who this king was, is not certainly known. Wilkinson understands it to have been Amosis or Ames, the first of the eighteenth dynasty. Others, that it was Rameses, the sixth of that dynasty. Champollion holds that it was Mando-nei, 1585—1565 before the Christian era. The doubts on this point may yet be cleared up. In a library lately discovered at Memphis, the history of this period is said to have been found. ¶ *Arose.* Came to the throne. ¶ *Who knew not Joseph.* This may mean that he was ignorant of his fame and public services, which may have occurred from his being a shepherd king, or from "the lapse of time or intervening revolutions."—Others understand it that he had no respect or esteem for Joseph; but this sense is not sanctioned by the usage of the Greek term. In any event, he did not favor Joseph, nor pay such regard to his patriotic measures as they deserved.

19. Stephen now introduces the history of the distress and humiliation of the covenant people—an exigency which God allowed to come to a crisis when He interposed and developed His gracious plan in a glorious deliverance. Moses is now to be shown as the man raised up by God to be a *deliverer* of this oppressed people, and thus a striking type of Jesus. ¶ *The same.* Rather, *This one*—this strange king. ¶ *Dealt subtilly.* Having dealt deceitfully, (see Exod. 1: 10,) that is, in his crafty device to compel the people of Israel to expose and destroy their male children so as to prevent their suffer-

ing the same oppression with their parents. By this means he aimed to weaken their strength and utterly hinder their increase. ¶ *Evil entreated.* Rather, *injured—abused.* ¶ *Our fathers.* The same prominence is given as before, to the fact that this is the history of the covenant people in God's wondrous progressive treatment of them, and His gradual development of His plan for their redemption. ¶ *So that.* The parents were thus compelled to abandon their children. Exod. 2: 2, 3. This was probably the plan and purpose of this king, as it was also the result. ¶ *To the end.* He would have the children suffer death by forcing their parents to "cast them out," or abandon them, as the parents of Moses abandoned him. Exod. 2: 2, 3; see vs. 21.

20. *In which time—at which juncture.* This was the Providential unfolding of God's plan, that just at this crisis of the people's grievous distress and Pharaoh's persecution, the great deliverer should be born. Thus God is secretly preparing for them release from bondage through a Redeemer who was a type of Christ. In such misery and oppression was Israel involved when the time for the promised deliverance arrived, (vs. 17.) ¶ *Exceeding fair.* Literally, *Fair to God.* Thus in the Hebrew, Nineveh is called "a great city to God"—meaning a *very great city.* Jonah 3: 3. Our version expresses well this idea, "*Exceeding fair*"—*divinely fair*, as we might say. Josephus speaks of the extreme beauty of Moses; "*a boy divine in form.*" In Heb. 11: 23, the same term is used and rendered in our version "*proper*," "*a proper child*," in the old English sense of "*handsome*." This is a hint of Him that is "*fairer than the children of men.*" But "*fair*



Ex. 2:8-10.

21 And \*when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

f Luke 24:19.

22 And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was 'mighty in words and in deeds.

g Ex. 2:11, 12.

23 \* And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.

to God" may also more properly mean fair in God's sight, with a beauty recognized by God, in the sense of his being "well pleasing to God." This was the great point, important in Stephen's argument to show that the choice of Moses was owing entirely to the good pleasure of God, who was well pleased in him, as Stephen knew from the fact that this comeliness is expressly recorded by the Holy Spirit. See Exod. 2:2. ¶ *Nourished up—brought up—nurtured*—"in his father's house," Amram's. Exod. 6:20. ¶ *Three months*. This was the period in which he was hid by his mother Jochabed, because she saw him to be "a goodly (handsome) child." Exod. 2:2.

21. *Cast out*. See vs. 19. *Exposed—outcast* in the ark of bulrushes by the river bank—given up to that forlorn hope. At such a time of the future deliverer's extremity—outcast among the flags of the Nile, and exposed to crocodiles and destruction, *Pharaoh's daughter*—(Some have given her name, but it is only a conjecture. Josephus says it was *Thermeuthis*, the daughter of Rameses)—*took him up—adopted him*. This does not refer to picking him up out of the ark or the water, but to the act of adopting; and the term is founded on the practice of laying new born children on the ground, so that the act of taking them up was that by which the father acknowledged them as his own. ¶ *For her own son*. Nourished or nurtured him to herself for her son—to be such an one as son. Thus the steps in the development of God's plan are noted.

22. It grew out of this step that Moses "*was learned*," &c. Literally, *was educated—was put to learning—was trained—schooled*. This fact is nowhere expressly mentioned in the Old Testament, but was deducible from the

common impression and from all the fair inference in the case. ¶ *Wisdom of the Egyptians*—which was notorious and proverbial, and thus compared with Solomon's wisdom. 1 Kings 4:30. It consisted chiefly in mathematics, natural philosophy and medicine, and the teachers were the priests. Philo, in his *Life of Moses*, enters into particulars, p. 606. Bishop Warburton draws from this verse a proof of the Divine legation of Moses, on the ground that he framed a system so different from that in which he had been educated, which is to be accounted for only on the supposition that God directed him. Some, on the contrary, have contended that he drew his system so directly from the Egyptian that he needed no supernatural qualification to account for his works. Dr. Prichard, in his treatise on Egyptian Mythology, has shown, 1. That his theological tenets are not at all drawn from the Egyptian. 2. That the social institutions—the civil and criminal laws, &c. of Moses, are totally distinct and different from those of Egypt, and that though in sacerdotal offices and ceremonial rites there are many striking resemblances to those of the Egyptian hierarchy, he must have been divinely inspired to put forth a system of such holy and pure morality and worship, instead of the corrupt and superstitious system in which he had been educated. ¶ *Mighty in words*, &c.—Forcible in discourse and in execution. This, all the history of Moses sufficiently proves. And though naturally he was slow of speech, at least according to his own estimate, (Exod. 4:10-12,) yet he was made by Divine inspiration *mighty* in speech and in action. This came by faith. Heb. 11:24.

23. Stephen dwells so minutely upon the history of Moses, because they chiefly appealed to him as the author—

24 And seeing one of *them* suffer wrong, he defended *him*, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian :

25 ¶ For he supposed his brethren would have under-<sup>¶ Or, Now.</sup> stood how that God by his hand would deliver them : but they understood not.

26 <sup>a</sup> And the next day he shewed himself unto them <sup>b Ex. 2:13.</sup>

ized law-giver and leader of the covenant people, (ch. 6:14; John 5:45, 47.) He now passes to that stage of the history when Moses came forth as a deliverer, first volunteering before he was sent. He comes forth, having been reared in a *heathen* court and trained in *heathen* learning—unlearned in Rabbinical lore—untaught in the schools of the Jewish doctors. ¶ *Forty years old.* Literally, *When there was fulfilled to him a forty years time*, or a fortieth anniversary. In Exod. 2:11, it is simply said, “When Moses was grown,” but the tradition of their doctors was that Moses was forty years each, in Egypt, in Midian, and in the wilderness. ¶ *It came into his heart.* This form of expression is used to denote that it was of his own volunteer motion that he first came forth as a deliverer, and before he was sent of God. This is in contrast with the expression, “Satan put it into the heart.” God called him to this work afterwards, vs. 34, 35. What came (or arose,) now of its own prompting, into his heart, was “to visit” his brethren—that is, for their deliverance, according to his own notion of being their appointed deliverer, vs. 25. ¶ *The children of Israel.* This is noted to keep in mind that it is the history of the covenant people in its unfoldings that is here narrated. See Ps. 105.

24. *Seeing one.* Literally, *Seeing a certain one.* It was an Israelite, doubtless, who was oppressed by an Egyptian, and the facts were familiar to Stephen's hearers. ¶ *Suffer wrong.* Literally, *wronged—abused.* ¶ *He defended.* There was an Egyptian law which made this to be his duty. *Diod. Sic. i. 77.* But Moses was actuated by another and higher purpose than merely to obey the law of the country. See vs. 25. The clause should be ren-

dered, “*He defended and redressed him that was oppressed.*” The words rendered “*avenged,*” mean “*wrought redress.*” ¶ *And smote.* Literally, *Smiting*, or having smitten, *the Egyptian secretly, and hiding the body.* Exod. 2:12. This is the way in which he wrought redress to the oppressed Israelite, by smiting the Egyptian to death. This is said by tradition to have been one of Pharaoh's task-masters. Exod. 2:12.

25. *For he supposed—He was thinking.* This is nowhere stated in the Old Testament, yet it is recorded (Heb. 11:24, 25,) that “when he was come to years he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.” ¶ *Would have understood.* Rather, *that they (really) understood that God by his (Moses') hand, or agency, would deliver them.* Rather, *is giving*, in this transaction as a beginning, *is about giving* a deliverance. Stephen introduces this feature of affairs to show how their fathers had acted toward Moses as they had lately acted toward Jesus—when “He came unto His own, His own received Him not.” (John 1:11.) ¶ *But they understood not.* John 1:5, 10. Hence Moses, when he was afterwards called to this important office, at first refused to undertake it.

26. *The next day—after slaying the Egyptian.* ¶ *Shewed himself—specially and as officially.* Literally, *He was seen—appeared to them fighting one another.* “Two men of the Hebrews,” (Exod. 2:13,) as the facts were familiar to the hearers. ¶ *Would have set them at one.* Literally, *Impelled them together unto peace—with an urgency as if authoritative.* ¶ *Sirs.* Literally, *Men,* *ye are brethren.* “An example,” says

that strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, *Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one to another?*

27 But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, *'Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?'*

28 Wilt thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?

29 <sup>Ex. 2: 15-22, and 4: 20, and 18: 3, 4.</sup> Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons.

30 <sup>Ex. 3: 2.</sup> And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

Bengel, "of fraternal correction."  
¶ *Why do ye wrong? Why do ye abuse, ill-treat one another?* In Exod. 2: 13, Moses gives the words, also, "Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?"

27. *But he that ill-treated his neighbor, thrust him away*—implying that Moses interfered to separate the combatants—and showing the temper of the wrong doer, adding sin to sin: ¶ *Who made. Who constituted—appointed thee, &c.* They question the authority of Moses in most arrogant terms, as the Pharisees questioned Christ's authority. They seem not to have known how great a man he was at court. ¶ *A ruler.* They seem to have understood him as claiming some official authority and prerogative, which they were not disposed to admit. This accounts for the harsh question.

28. *Wilt thou. Art thou willing, or dost thou wish to kill me.* ¶ *As. In the same manner—after the same fashion as, &c.*—that is, *secretly*—hiding the body in the sand. Exod. 2: 12. ¶ *As thou didst.* Literally, *As thou killedst.* This Hebrew, so far from recognizing his *delivering* act as such, charged it upon him as the murder of an Egyptian, for which he could be held accountable.

29. This angry reception caused Moses to flee. In Exod. 2: 15, we read that Pharaoh sought to take Moses' life. Philo states that Pharaoh was afraid of Moses conspiring against him. ¶ *At this saying.* Literally, *on this word, or upon this being said.* He saw that he had failed in his attempt to conceal the murder, and he was now

compelled to flee from Pharaoh for his life, see Exod. 2: 12. Yet afterwards this same fugitive came to the court of Pharaoh as God's messenger, and demanded boldly the release of his brethren! ¶ *And was a stranger.* Literally, *and became a sojourner.* ¶ *Midian*—Gr. for *Midian*. Gesenius makes this tract of country to have extended from the eastern shore of the Euxine Gulf to the region of Moab, on the one hand, and to the vicinity of Mt. Sinai, on the other. The people were nomadic in their habits—wandering from place to place. At this time they seem to have been encamped in the neighborhood of Sinai and Horeb. See Exod. 18: 5; Numb. 31: 2. ¶ *Where he begat.* Thus his history is traced so far as to show that here he became sufficiently settled to marry Zipporah, and to beget two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, Exod. 2: 15; 4: 20; 18: 3.

30. *Forty years.* Literally, *and forty years having been fulfilled.* Moses was now eighty years old. See vs. 23. Tradition said that Moses dwelt in Pharaoh's palace forty years—dwelt forty years in Midian, and ruled Israel forty years. ¶ *Sinai.* The wilderness of Mt. Sinai, so called, is the desert in which Mt. Sinai is located, which thus gives its name to the tract of country. The mountain itself is called Sinai, but the range or group is called Horeb: and thus the names seem interchangeable. See Exod. 3: 1. ¶ *An angel of the Lord appeared to him—or was seen by him.* This was the glorious Second Person of the blessed

31 When Moses saw *it*, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold *it*, the voice of the Lord came unto him,

32 *Saying*, <sup>m Matt. 22:32.</sup> "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of <sup>Heb. 11:16.</sup> Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold.

33 <sup>n Ex. 3:5.</sup> "Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from <sup>Josh. 5:15.</sup> thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.

34 <sup>o Ex. 3:7.</sup> "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.

Trinity—the Angel of His presence, (Isa. 63:9,) the Revealer of the Godhead, (John 1:18,) called in vs. 31, Jehovah Himself. Compare Exod. 3:2, 4. "This second appearing of God to Moses (see vs. 2,) introduced the *legal* dispensation, as the first to Abraham introduced the *patriarchal*." (See *Stier*.) ¶ *In a flame of fire in a bush.* Literally, *of a bush*. See Exod. 3:2. This was the token of God's visible presence, as in the Shecinah or cloud of glory, and in the pillar of fire in the wilderness. Christ was the light which all along was shining in darkness, (John 1:9,) the brightness of the Father's glory—the Word of God—the Angel of Jehovah—the Messenger (angel) of the covenant, (Mal. 3:1,) Exod. 23:20, 21; Hos. 12:3-5. He it is whom Stephen preaches—the Prophet like to Moses—promised, (vs. 37.)

31. *When*. Literally, *Moses seeing—wondered at the spectacle; and he drawing near to observe* (closely) "why the bush was not burned," *the voice of the Lord* (Jehovah) *became* (occurred, took place) *to him*. In the Old Testament narrative, it would seem that the first word was the command to put off the shoes; though it is said that "*moreover*," in addition to this, whether before or after,—the words in vs. 32 were spoken.

32. Stephen records this announcement of Jehovah to Moses as the living God, (Matt. 22:32,) and the author of the covenant-promises to the fathers. Thus he still keeps before his hearers the important truth, that

this was in the line of God's dealings with their nation. ¶ *Trembled*. Literally, *becoming fearful*. See Heb. 12:21. So at times "so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." ¶ *To behold*. To observe, as he drew near to do, vs. 31. "He hid his face," Exod. 3:6.

33. *Then said*. Rather, *And the Lord said*. ¶ *Put off—loose the sole* (sandal) *of thy feet*. This was understood in eastern countries as an act of reverence. The shoes are put off when persons enter any sacred place—when visitors enter a dwelling, or when scholars enter a school. In Damascus, Cairo, &c., we were compelled to put off our shoes at the entrance of the mosque, and to wear a straw slipper furnished for the occasion at the door. See John 13:10. ¶ *For the place*. The reason is here given for this Divine direction. God here declares that even that wilderness spot was made holy by His presence; and it is clearly implied that the Temple owes its sanctity to the same; and that, therefore, it has no essential holiness, and is not necessarily perpetual, (see Isa. 56,) but that any place is holy where God pleases to reveal Himself.

34. *I have seen*. Literally, *Seeing I have seen*—a Hebrew idiom, meaning *I have surely seen*. ¶ *The affliction*. Rather, *the maltreatment*, oppression—referring to their bondage under taskmasters. ¶ *My people*—who are in Egypt—my covenant people who are suffering there. ¶ *Their groaning*, under their oppressions. Their outcries of distress went up into the ear of

35 This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer \* by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.

Ex. 14: 19.  
Numb. 20: 16.  
Ex. 12: 41, and  
33: 1.  
Ex. 7, and 8.  
and 9, and 10,  
and 11, and 14.  
Ps. 105: 27.  
Ex. 14: 21, 27,  
28, 29.  
Ex. 16: 1, 35.

36 † He brought them out, after that he had † shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, \* and in the Red sea, † and in the wilderness forty years.

God. ¶ *Come down.* I descended (from heaven.) This is the preface to Moses' commission. This shows the occasion of such Divine interference. These and such like expressions in which God represents Himself after the manner of men, seem designed to prepare the mind for the Incarnation, and to anticipate the fact. ¶ *To deliver.* God undertakes deliverance for His people, else it could never be had. For this end He commissions Moses, as he gave His only begotten Son, whom Moses foreshadowed, as a deliverer, vs. 35. ¶ *And now come;* or, rather as an adverb of address, *δεῦρο, hither! I will send.*

35. Moses' Divine commission as a deliverer, and his rejection by the people, is here stated, to show that the Prophet like unto Moses, who was rejected by them, was likewise commissioned for the covenant people's deliverance. ¶ *This Moses whom they denied.* This very rejected one, whose authority as ruler and judge they disputed. ¶ *The same.* Literally, *this one.* The repetition of the demonstrative pronoun here, is very emphatic, and is used to call attention to the parallel between Moses and Christ, as deliverers of the covenant people appointed by God, and rejected by those whom they came to save. See ch. 2: 23, 24; 3: 13-15. ¶ *Deliverer, λυτρωτήν.* The term here means properly *Redeemer*, and is used in the Septuagint to express the office of the *Göel*, or *kinsman Redeemer*, but only as applied to God. Ps. 18 (19): 15; 77 (78): 35. Properly, it is one who redeems a captive by paying a ransom; and the work of ransoming His true covenant people, is often applied to Christ in the New Testament. Moses did not pay a ransom, but God by Moses ransomed His people there —

bought them out of captivity, Isa. 45: 13, 14. And this deliverance was typical of Christ's ransoming believers from the bondage and the curse of sin. Even Moses' work of deliverance was *by the hand of*—by the power and prerogative and Divine work of—the Angel of the covenant, who “led his people like a flock, by the hand of Moses and Aaron,” (Ps. 77: 20,) and by whose efficient interposition Moses fulfilled his office-work, Numb. 20: 16. Already then in that time of *their fathers'* deliverance it was *Jesus Christ* who was the *great Deliverer*, working by the instrumentality of Moses.

36. *He.* Rather, *This one*—Moses. He who was sent by God as the deliverer, actually *led them out.* ¶ *After that.* Rather—*having wrought*—or, *working*—or, *by working.* All the miracles were not wrought prior to the Exodus. This is noted as the means by which he led them out, while it is declared, also, that he wrought miracles through their wilderness route. ¶ *Wonders.* Prodigies. ¶ *Signs.* Miraculous signs of the Divine presence. ¶ *In the land of Egypt.* By the ten plagues, Exod. 4-12. ¶ *Red sea.* It was *in the sea*—dividing it so as to make a passage for the people and then engulf their enemies in its returning waves, Exod. 14. See Ps. 136: 13-16. The miracle was wrought at the northern extremity of the sea. In Hebrew it is called *Yam Suph*—the sea of sea-weed, and is supposed by some to take its name from the redness of the weed. Others think it was named rather from the *Edomites*—*red men*—who dwelt on the northern coast. It still bears the traditional name among the natives which refers back to this history—the *Sea of Destruction.* ¶ *Forty years*—that is, *in all*—including all

37 ¶ This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, || like unto me; \*him shall ye hear.

38 \*This is he that was in the church in the wilderness with \*the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and *with* our fathers: \*who received the lively  
<sup>b</sup> oracles to give unto us :

<sup>u</sup> Deut. 18 : 15,  
 18.  
 ch. 3 : 22.  
 || Or, *as myself*.  
 \* Matt. 17 : 5.  
 † Ex. 19 : 3-17.  
 ‡ Isa. 63 : 9.  
 Gal. 3 : 19.  
 Heb. 2 : 2.  
 a Ex. 21 : 1.  
 Deut. 5 : 27-31,  
 and 34 : 4.  
 John 1 : 17.  
 b Rom. 8 : 2.

the miracles, and in round numbers a year for every day in which the spies had searched the land, though the actual wandering in the wilderness was more exactly thirty-eight years. In the first month of the fortieth year they encamped a second time in Kadesh, on the southern borders of Canaan, thirty-eight years from their first arrival there early in the second year after the Exodus, Numb. chs. 13, 14, 20 : 1-13; Deut. 1 : 19.

37. Here Stephen links *Moses with Christ*—the Moses whom they boasted with the Jesus Christ whom they rejected. And this he does to give point to the parallel between the rejection of Moses by their fathers and the rejection of Christ by the nation now. He here definitely refers to the promise of a Messiah, and to their sacred obligation to hear and obey him. This was the great prophecy which was so specially fulfilled to them in their long line of prophets, *terminating in Christ, whom they all foreshadowed*, Deut. 18 : 5. It is by such steps that Stephen advances to the fuller proclamation of Jesus as their promised Deliverer and Messiah. This was the Messianic prediction which they were most familiar with, and which they frequently brought forward, (Matt. 21 : 11; John 1 : 21, 25; 6 : 14; ch. 3 : 23; 7 : 40.) Stephen connects all the personal history of Moses as deliverer of the covenant people with this explicit testimony that he gives to Jesus Christ, showing him to be at once a witness and a type. ¶ *A prophet*. Peter had cited this prophecy in ch. 3 : 22, and had interpreted it. Christ was that Prophet that was to come; though Stephen does not yet

expressly say so, but leaves it to be inferred. He was to be like Moses, raised up to them (for their service,) from among their brethren, (one of their own nation,) and to be as Moses also, a Lawgiver, and Deliverer, and Mediator, as well as a Prophet—one of the same peculiar rank and office-work. ¶ *Him*. Their own Moses enjoined upon them a strict obedience to this Prophet, (see ch. 3 : 23,) as Peter had lately reminded them.

38. *This is he*. This Moses, whom they so rejected, (vs. 35,) was the distinguished mediator of the ancient Church and covenant. ¶ *That was*—rather, *that became*—indicating a change in his relations. ¶ *The church*. This term, *ἐκκλησία*, was used in ch. 2 : 48 and 5 : 11, (see *Notes*,) and was familiar in the Old Testament usage, as the assembly or congregation of Israel, separated from all other nations, and journeying through a wilderness to the land of promise. This, also, is the primitive idea of God's Church in the world. Hence this term was used by our Lord as denoting the whole body, and any organized community of believers, Matt. 16 : 18; 18 : 17. And so God "led His people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron" (as pastors.) This Moses was mediator between the covenant Angel and the fathers, as the next and closing clause more expressly shows. See Gal. 3 : 19. He was *with* both—in close communication. In all this, Moses was a type of Christ, as well as a witness of Him. ¶ *The lively oracles*. The living (and life-giving) oracles were received by Moses from God. The condition of the Jews in the time of Stephen was very similar to that in Egypt, under subject

39 To whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust *him* from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.

• Ex. 32:1.

40 °Saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for *as for* this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

• Dent. 9:16.  
Ps. 106:19.

41 <sup>a</sup> And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

tion to a foreign power. And now, also, God has raised up for them a Deliverer whom they have already rejected and crucified. But yet again He is presented to them in His word and Spirit, and they are just about to reject Him again, Heb. 4:12; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet. 1:23.

39. *To whom*—i. e. *Moses*. ¶ *Our fathers*. He thus keeps up the reference to the heads of the Jewish nation, to fasten the conviction on his hearers that in their present rebellious conduct they were showing themselves to be the proper successors of those who rejected Moses, God's appointed messenger. See vs. 51, 52. ¶ *Would not*. Rather, *Were not willing*. See Exodus 32:1-3. ¶ *To obey*. Literally, *To become obedient*. ¶ *Thrust*. The same term is used in verse 27, and intimates that the people repeated toward Moses what the individual Hebrew did at first, and thus it shows that this was the character of their nation. ¶ *In their hearts*. They longed after the flesh-pots of Egypt, and turned back to its idolatries. Numb. 11:5; Exod. 32:1, 4. At length they openly proposed to return again to that land. Numb. 14:4; Exod. 16:3; 17:3. The chief idea seems to be that "they apostatized in heart to the Egyptian idolatries."

40. This seems to describe their apostasy, and to define the sense in which they returned, &c. ¶ *Make us gods*. (Exod. 32:1.) They asked of Aaron to make for them *idol gods*. It is supposed to have been the Egyptian worship of the Sacred Bull, from which they got the idea of the Golden Calf. The Egyptians, under this image, adored the creative principle in nature.

¶ *To go before us*. As Jehovah had done in the pillar of cloud and fire. Exod. 13:21. ¶ *For*. The reason is here given why they wanted such idol gods—namely, because of Moses continuing so long absent in the mount. ¶ *This Moses*. *This man—this one—Moses*—this leader and representative of Jehovah—who *went before us* in the Exodus—we know not what has happened to him. This is given as a reason for resorting to some other dependence, now that Moses had failed them, and they propose to adopt idol gods, as the alternative system which Moses had so strenuously opposed.

41. *They made a calf*. One verb, used only here, is employed to express this. Bengel remarks, "A crime very notable is expressed by a remarkable and newly coined word." Literally, *They calfified*. This was done probably in imitation of the Egyptian idolatry. The Sacred Bull ("Apis") was worshiped as the image of *Osiris*, the inventor of the plow, the god of Agriculture. At Memphis, in 1850, we saw the French engineers excavating the magnificent marble remains of the celebrated *Serapion*, or Temple of the *Bull*. It was not far from the Pyramids of Sakhara. We rode up just as they came upon the first marble figures that stood in a row around the altar. Botta and Layard, at Nineveh, have unburied colossal bulls, and they are set up in their huge granite forms in the British and French Museums. ¶ *Offered*. Literally, *Led up a sacrifice*—as a national solemnity. The language used by the people in the wilderness is the same that was used by Jeroboam when he introduced the worship of the golden calves at Dan and

42 Then \*God turned, and gave them up to worship \*the host of heaven: as it is written in the book of the prophets, \*O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices *by the space of* forty years in the wilderness?

43 Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

Bethel. 1 Kings 12: 28. ¶ *Rejoiced, made merry*, (Exod. 32: 6,) in dances, &c. as a feast in honor of their idols. Not only so, but they confidently *rejoiced in*, gloried in, the *works of their own hands*. This latter clause is an exposure of the absurdity of idolatry, that men should rejoice not in God who made them and made all things, but in a god which they themselves have made! (See Isa. 44: 14, 15.)

42. *Turned*. *Turned away*—from His former protection of them, (Josh. 24: 20,) *and gave them up*—judicially abandoned them. Jer. 7: 10; Hosea 4: 17; Rom. 1: 24, 28. ¶ *The host of heaven*. 2 Kings 17: 16. *The heavenly bodies*—the stars, the moon, the sun. Stephen refers to a passage in Amos 5: 25, 26. This fact is not recorded in the Pentateuch, but may refer to Baal worship. Afterwards there are frequent traces of star worship. 2 Kings 17: 26; 21: 3, 5; Jer. 19: 13. ¶ *The book*. The twelve Prophets were contained in one book, roll, or volume, called the Book of the Prophets; another book was called the Book of Psalms. ¶ *Have ye offered*. This may mean not to imply a negative answer, but rather to intimate that as surely as they had offered any of the prescribed sacrifices to God in the wilderness, they had all worshiped Moloch, &c. “*Yea*,” &c. as if it were said, “Have ye done the one? Yea, (rather,) ye have done the other.” Or it may mean, “Have ye indeed offered these sacrifices to me. No! But rather to yourselves or to devils.” (1 Cor. 10: 20.) Or, as *Humphrey* suggests, “Did ye sacrifice to me forty years in the wilderness and yet adopt the worship of Moloch?” *Alford* understands the idea to be that God does not receive

as offered to Him, sacrifices in which He has been made to share with idols. ¶ *Slain beasts and sacrifices*. The various kind of offerings prescribed by the law.

43. *Yea*. Rather, *And*, or *whereas*; perhaps meaning, “while ye did not *really* sacrifice to me, ye *really* took up, &c.” Or it may mean, “Did ye sacrifice to me, *whereas* ye took up—*carried about*.” ¶ *The tabernacle*. Not *my* tabernacle, but that of Moloch, the idol god, ye carried about—some suppose, in religious processions, but more probably in small shrines as amulets for secret charms, as at the temple of Diana. ¶ *Moloch*. This is a name taken from the Hebrew word for “king.” Hence the Greek version uses the term for king. In the Hebrew the prophet uses the terms “of your king,” (malkken.) Sometimes it is read “Milcom.” Moloch was, as some suppose, the proper name of Saturn among the Phenicians, with whom Baal means *lord*. It was the national god of the Ammonites. 1 Kings 11: 7; 2 Kings 21: 3, 4. Human sacrifices were offered to this idol in the form of a hollow brazen image, with the head of an ox and the human arms outstretched, and heated by a fire kindled within the statue, so that children were offered alive to the idol by laying them in its heated arms. This abominable superstition was practiced in the deep valley of Hinnom at the foot of Mount Zion. It was known in Moses’ time and prohibited. (Lev. 18: 21; 20: 25.) It was probably derived from the Egyptian worship of the Sun, which was regarded as the residence of the soul of Osiris, under the symbol of an ox. The priests offered these children, and drowned their cries with a drum. Hence, the place was called



44 Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, || speaking unto Moses, <sup>¶ Or, who spoke.</sup> <sup>¶ Ex. 25: 40, and 26: 30.</sup> <sup>¶ Heb. 8: 5.</sup> <sup>¶ Josh. 3: 14.</sup> <sup>¶ Or, having received.</sup> <sup>h</sup> that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen.

45 <sup>1</sup> Which also our fathers || that came after brought

*Tophet*, from *toph*, a drum. Solomon built a temple to this god on the Mount of Olives. Manasseh made his children to pass through the fire in honor of this idol. 2 Kings 21: 3, 6. ¶ *And the star*. An image of a star worshiped as God. The Hebrew reads, "Chiun your images, the star of your god." The Greek translators use the Coptic name *Remphan*, (or *Rephan*,) for the Arabic name *Chiun*. Amos 5: 25. This seems to have been a star which was worshiped, probably Saturn, which was so called in Arabic. Some take *Chiun* to mean a frame work, or carriage for transporting the idol. *Remphan* in the Coptic means *light-giver*—king of heaven—and hence understood of *the Sun*. ¶ *Figures. Types*—images. ¶ *Which ye made*. This was the point of Stephen's rebuke that they (their fathers,) were such idolaters of old. ¶ *And* (on this account,) *I will carry you away—(make you migrate) beyond Babylon*. This is expressed more fully in Amos 5: 27. The people of Israel were never cured of their idolatries until their captivity at Babylon. In Hebrew it is *Damascus*—but "beyond Damascus" was Babylon—and the general idea was that God would scatter them eastward in that direction; especially in the great and notorious captivity in Babylon. Stephen mentions Babylon, therefore, as referring to the later captivity of Judah, which was that most commonly known. The prediction was accomplished not in one dispersion, but in many, and hence the fulfillment rested not in either name, but in the general fact.

44. He comes now more directly to speak of the Temple, which he was accused of profaning. He approaches the subject by referring to the holy places of their fathers, showing that these were changed, and that God was **not** confined to a locality for ever, but

that in the wilderness He was worshiped in the *tabernacle*, a shifting tent, made by Moses according to the pattern given him by God. ¶ *Tabernacle of witness*. In contrast with "the tabernacle of Moloch," (vs. 43,) is *the tent of the testimony*. This phrase was familiar to them in their Greek version of the Old Testament. It was used to translate a Hebrew phrase, meaning "tent of appointment," or of assembly—as the tent or tabernacle appointed by God for the meeting of God and the people. There is another sense in which the tabernacle was called a tabernacle of testimony, (Numb. 9: 15, 17, 23,) as containing the two tables of stone, the testimony of God's covenant with their nation, (Heb. 8: 5,) or as being itself a testimony of God's presence with them. ¶ *Appointed*. God Himself appointed, in His own sovereignty, the place of His worship—and He was not bound by any local obligations—and His command to Moses was that he should make the tabernacle according to the fashion that he had seen. This fact shows clearly (1) that the whole matter depended upon God's sovereign pleasure, and was tied to no outward necessity—(2) that this structure being after a heavenly conception, or plan, or model, was designed as an image or type of heavenly realities, (see Ep. to Heb. chs. 8, 9)—and (3) that the sanctuary was of comparatively recent origin, no more ancient than Moses' time, and could be changed, as he shows it had been.

45. To show that the Temple is not necessarily permanent, this verse glances at the changes through which the tabernacle or wilderness sanctuary passed, until the days of David, when it was superseded by the temple. ¶ *That came after*. Rather, *Which also our fathers having received by succession, or inherited it, (from the generation*

in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, \* whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.

46 <sup>1</sup> Who found favour before God, and <sup>m</sup> desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47 <sup>a</sup> But Solomon built him an house.

48 Howbeit <sup>o</sup> the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet,

2 Neh. 9:24.  
Ps. 44:2, & 78:55.  
1 Sam. 16:1.  
2 Sam. 7:1.  
Ps. 89:19.  
ch. 13:22.  
1 Kings 8:17.  
1 Chron. 22:7.  
Ps. 132:4, 5.  
1 Kings 6:1,  
and 8:20.  
1 Chron. 17:12.  
2 Chron. 3:1.  
1 Kings 8:27.  
2 Chron. 2:6.  
and 6:18.  
ch. 17:24.

that fell in the wilderness,) brought in (hither to Canaan) with Jesus (Joshua) into the possession (in the taking possession, or at the conquest) of the Gentiles. ¶ With Jesus. This is the Greek form of writing the name Joshua in the Septuagint, (or Greek version of the Old Testament Scriptures,) and it should have been here rendered Joshua. This is also the case in Heb. 4:8, and in Josephus, and in the apocryphal book Ecclesiasticus. Yet the name of Joshua was originally Oshea, (Numbers 13:8,) meaning *salvation*. The reference here, of course, is to the occupation of the promised land by the covenant people, with Joshua as their leader. In this capacity Joshua was a type of Jesus, as Paul shows in the Hebrews. ¶ The Gentiles—the Canaanites—whom God drove out. Though the tabernacle was brought “into the land which God gave them for a possession among the Gentiles,” (Syriac version,) it was carried about from place to place, while God was driving out the Gentiles, and so it continued that God had no fixed abode, but only this movable tent for His sanctuary, until the days of David.

III. Here Stephen reaches the THIRD PERIOD in the History—the TIMES OF DAVID AND SOLOMON, vss. 46–50.

46. David established the worship of God in a fixed locality, on Mount Zion, and he was the first to meditate a more fixed structure for the sanctuary. He found favor before God—as “the man after God’s own heart”—and one greatly honored, and helped, and blessed by God. He desired to find (asked permission—sought leave to find out,) (see Ps. 132:5; 2 Sam. 7:4,) a tabernacle—σκηνωμα—not the word

for a tent, but a fixed shelter—a place, or fixed locality for what has been movable. He sought to build an house, where the ark that had been carried about in their wanderings and wars, might be deposited, 1 Chron. 22:7. The inference is, that as David, the favored one of God, was denied this request, it was not at all essential to the Divine worship; and that God has all along exercised His sovereign pleasure in the plan for His sanctuary. ¶ The God of Jacob. The covenant God of Israel, in allusion to Psalm 132:2–5.

47. But Solomon, though inferior to David, was allowed this privilege, altogether according to God’s sovereign pleasure, (2 Chron. 6:7, 8,) and for so long a time the covenant people were without a temple. Solomon was indeed the Prince of Peace, as his name imports—under whose peaceful reign the kingdom of Christ was set forth, (Ps. 72:17.) He was the son of David, and so he was the type of great David’s greater Son. David was denied this privilege, because he had been a man of war, 1 Chron. 22:8.

48. Howbeit. Though Solomon did build for God so grand a sanctuary as that first temple on Mount Moriah, yet he himself declared that this did not imply that any material structure could contain God, or that he is confined to any earthly locality, 1 Kings 8:27. So David in his prayer, 1 Chron. 29:10–19. Besides, the Gospel prophet Isaiah, at the close of his prophecy, looking forward to this very time of the transition from Judaism to Christianity, predicted this very change from the temple worship to a universal

<sup>p</sup> Isa. 65: 4, 2.  
Matt. 5: 34, 35,  
and 23: 22.

49 <sup>p</sup> Heaven *is* my throne, and earth *is* my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what *is* the place of my rest?

<sup>g</sup> Ex. 32: 9, and  
33: 5.

Isa. 48: 4.  
<sup>r</sup> Lev. 26: 41.  
Deut. 10: 16.  
Jer. 4: 4, and  
6: 10, and 9: 26.  
Ez. 41: 9.

50 Hath not my hand made all these things?

51 ¶ Ye <sup>a</sup> stiffnecked and <sup>r</sup> uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so do ye.

extension of the true religion, Isa. 66: 1, 2. Paul, adopting Stephen's sentiment and argument, uses similar language in addressing the Greeks at Mar's Hill, (ch. 17: 24.) Jesus Christ Himself came to be the true and living Temple—the personal residence of God on the earth—which would dispense with the stone structure, (Mal. 1: 11.) So He said, "Destroy this temple"—"speaking of the temple of His body." ¶ *Place of my rest.* Of my fixed residence, 2 Sam. 7: 6.

50. Stephen reminds them how God said by Isaiah, that in the nature of the case He could be confined to no material structure, for all material things were only the work of His hands. And the prophet, in that remarkable passage, closed his predictions by prophesying of the abrogation of the temporary ceremonial economy. He even declared that they who would count it essential and cleave to it after it was abolished, would be regarded by God as no better than idolaters, embracing a false religion. Stephen thus shows them, on the authority of Solomon and Isaiah, that the very doctrine he was charged with, as a profanation of the temple, had been all along taught in their Scriptures, and that God had expressly disavowed any confinement to any house or place. Spiritual religion and worship had been always that which God sought. Stephen had all along shown the progressive development of God's plan in the history of the covenant people; and now he has come to the crisis then pending—the change in dispensations contemplated by the builder of the Temple, by Isaiah the prophet, and by God Himself, as also by Malachi, the last of their prophets, (Mal. 3: 3, 4.)

This is the point which he aimed at in his review of the covenant history. This was also the very point in which the covenant people showed their blind and perverse impiety, for they had come to cleave to the temple of wood and stone all the more stiffly, as they raged more vehemently against the perfect Temple—the body and Church of Christ.

51. Thus Stephen launches out upon the application of all his doctrines and arguments. All along he has referred to such rebellions of the people, (vss. 9, 25, 35, 39, &c.) as characteristic of their history. There is no need of supposing (as some have done) that the speaker was here interrupted, and thus was led to this sudden change in his tone and to this language of severe rebuke. He had come to his own time and to the practical matter, and now he charges upon them, that so far from his being the profaner of God's house and worship, it is *they* who have rejected God. ¶ *Stiff-necked.* This was a term often applied to the people by Moses and the prophets, Exod. 32: 9; 33: 3-5; and in Deut. 10: 16, associated with uncircumcision of heart. The term is taken from the resistance of oxen that will not bend their necks to receive the yoke, and applies to rebellious, stubborn people. ¶ *Uncircumcised in heart and ears*—means, heathenish in feeling and in hearing or understanding. As the covenant people were circumcised, so the uncircumcised were aliens and heathen. Stephen therefore charges them, even the Sanhedrim, with being stubborn and rebellious against God, and aliens and heathen in thought and feeling—the veriest opposite to all that they boasted. See Rom. 2: 29. ¶ *Ye*

52 \* Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of 'the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53 \* Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

\* 2 Chron. 36: 16.  
Matt. 21: 35, and 23: 34-37.  
1 Thess. 2: 15.  
1 ch. 3: 14.

\* Ex. 20: 1.  
Gal. 3: 19.  
Heb. 2: 2.

*do always.* Stephen applies this charge to the nation in all their history, always rebellious, and rejecting God, from the time of Joseph and Moses, as he had shown. They had rejected the messages of the Holy Spirit, 1 Thess. 5: 19, 20. They had, indeed, most stiffly cleaved to the outward form of worship, but in it all had *resisted the Holy Ghost*—(literally, *to fall out with—withstand*)—and were now most bitterly opposed to any spiritual ideas of worship. See Isa. 63: 10. He had thus far spoken all along of their fathers—now he comes to themselves, and charges them with the same unspiritual and perverse feeling and conduct as their fathers had shown. ¶ *As your fathers did*, vss. 27, 35, 39-43.

52. *Which.* This is a strong mode of declaring that they, as a nation, were in the habit of persecuting the prophets, so much so that he challenges them to say which of them they, as a people, had *not* persecuted. See 2 Chron. 36: 15; Matt. 21: 35; 23: 34-36; Luke 13: 33. Jeremiah utters a similar complaint against the Jews, Jer. 2: 30. All those who were God's messengers to the people and who foretold of God's purposes, even to the coming of Christ, they had pursued with violence, so that Jesus cried out, "O Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee," (Luke 13: 34.) And this they themselves were ready to do with Stephen. The nation had *slain them*—(the prophets)—*which shewed before* (foreshowed—predicted) *of the coming of the Just One.* Their hostility to the Holy Ghost had been shown in their putting to death those who (as their chief office) foretold of Christ under the previous dispensation, a dispensation which was altogether a shadowing

forth of the advent of Jesus Christ. ¶ *The Just One.* "The Holy One and the Just;" "the end of the law for righteousness," to whom the law looked forward, and who alone could bring in the perfect dispensation, (see ch. 3: 14.) This title, "*the Just One*," was in use among the Jews to designate their Messiah. He is thus spoken of three times in speeches to the Jews, ch. 3: 14; 22: 14; see Luke 23: 47. ¶ *Of whom.* Of Jesus Christ. ¶ *Ye have been.* Literally, *Ye* (emphatic) *have now become* (true to your origin and your national character) *the betrayers*—for this Sanhedrim had been instigators of Judas in his betrayal, Matt. 26: 14-16. Stephen here charges his judges with the high crimes of betraying and putting to death Jesus; and lays emphasis upon the term "*now*," as contrasted with former times; and "*ye*" as contrasted with *their fathers*. But these had even murdered Him, while their fathers had only murdered the prophets who predicted Him.

53. Our Lord argued in the same way for His own defense and for their conviction: "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?" John 8: 19. ¶ *Who.* Rather, *ye who* (as further explaining the case.) *Ye*, (the last of all who ought so to have acted.) *Ye*, Jews, *who have received the law*, "to whom were committed the oracles of God," (Rom. 3: 2,) and yet who had so far fought against its proper spirit and sought to defeat its end: murdering Him who came to be its end and fulfillment. ¶ *By the disposition of angels.* Rather, *at the orders or arrangements of angels.* The fact that the law was given at Sinai by the agency of angels, is used to exalt the honor conferred upon the people, and to enhance the guilt of their disobedience. So Paul

2 ch. 3: 33.

54 ¶ When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with *their* teeth.

3 ch. 6: 5.

55 But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

(Heb. 2: 2,) says, "for if the law *spoken by angels* was stedfast," and in Gal. 3: 19, he speaks of it as "*ordained by angels in the hands of a Mediator.*" The same term is used in the latter instance as here, only in the verbal form, and here it might read, "by the *ordination*, communication or arrangement of angels." All we know is, that angels were ministers on that occasion, and that some of the solemn and impressive circumstances were carried on by their agency. The trumpets and thunderings and other attendant demonstrations may have been due to their agency. They are spoken of as being present "at Sinai in the Holy Place," and the Lord as being among them. Ps. 68: 17; see Deut. 33: 2, 3. Their agency may be referred to where the mount is spoken of as that "which burned with fire, with blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words," &c. (Heb. 12: 18, 19.) This allusion to so stupendous a demonstration, angelic and preternatural, in their history, at the giving of the Law, when they were specially constituted as a nation chosen of God, forms the most stirring climax in the discourse of Stephen, and his bold and earnest enforcement of all these facts to show the enormity of their disobedience, could no longer be endured by the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Have not kept it.* "With all your phylacteries,"—Bengel. They violated it in seeking to kill Him, ch. 7: 13.

54. *When they heard.* Literally, *and hearing these things*,—especially vs. 51-53, but rather as the pungent practical application of the whole discourse. ¶ *Cut to the heart—as with a saw.* See ch. 5: 33, *Notes*. Tyndale, "Their hearts clave asunder." Geneva, "Their hearts burst for anger." They were not "*pricked in their hearts*" with genuine conviction, (as ch. 2: 37,) but *sawn*

*through* in the most irritating and mangle torture of their consciences and passions. ¶ *Gnashed on him.* Literally, *gnashed the teeth upon him.* Wiclif has it, "*Grenneden* (grinned) *with teeth on him.*" This expresses their spite and violence of rage, in which they gnash the teeth not only *at* him, but *upon* him, as if they would seize upon him with their teeth—snapping at him, like a dog or beast of prey.

55. *Being full.* Literally, *He existing, full*, &c. not merely being filled at this moment, but being in this condition all along, as is mentioned at first of him, (ch. 6: 5.) ¶ *Looked up.* Rather, *Having gazed, or looked intently*, into the heaven. It is not necessary to suppose that he was where he could see the open sky, any more than we are to suppose that he saw with his natural eye into the heaven. But this vision was supernaturally given to him. He saw their ferocity and rage, and with true Christian faith, he cast his eyes upward, and fixed the eye of child-like confidence on "the things above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." (Colossians 3: 1.) ¶ *The glory of God*—the visible manifestation of God as in the Shecinah—some glorious exhibition of God Himself, which was granted to confirm the faith of the dying martyr. See vs. 2. See Matt. 16: 27. ¶ *And Jesus standing.* Some of the ancient commentators understand this standing posture as denoting Christ's active assistance of Stephen in this extremity, having risen from His seat for his help. But it seems rather to signify Christ's active office-work as the Great High Priest, officiating for His people. He is usually referred to as *sitting* on the right hand in the attitude of a Governor and Judge. (Matt. 26: 64; Mark 16: 19; Eph. 1: 20; Heb. 1: 3.) Reference may be intended to the vision in Zech. 3: 1, where Joshua,

56 And said, Behold, \*I see the heavens opened, and the \*Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

\* Ex. 1:1.  
Matt. 3:16.  
ch. 10:11.  
a Dan. 7:13.

57 Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord.

b 1 Kings 21:13.  
Luke 4:29.  
Heb. 13:12.  
c Lev. 24:16.  
d Deut. 13:9,  
10, and 17:7.  
ch. 5:1, and 22:  
20.

58 And <sup>b</sup>cast him out of the city, <sup>c</sup>and stoned him: and <sup>d</sup>the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul.

the high priest, stands before the angel of the Lord. He sees now the Great High Priest standing as the representative of His people, and they are justified in Him. But *standing on the right hand of God* denotes active office-work, and co-equal power. (Ps. 110: 1; 5: 6,) as Mediator, Intercessor, Deliverer, Redeemer. Stephen *saw the heavens open*, (John 1: 51,) not shut, and this glorious Representative and Atoning High Priest assuring his confidence, and inviting his entrance—standing ready to receive him, as He was actually exercising His kingly power on high.

56. *The heavens opened.* This was according to the promise made by our Lord to Nathaniel, John 1: 51, only that here it is “opened,” not merely “open,” that he sees them as if just now opened to his view and for his entrance. So in Matt. 3: 16, at Christ's baptism, the heavens were opened. ¶ *The Son of man.* This title is taken from Daniel 7: 13, 14, where Jesus is prophesied of as seated at the head of the Universe. See also Ps. 8. It is nowhere else in the New Testament applied to Christ except by Himself: and here Stephen uses it, repeating the very words which Jesus Himself had used before this Sanhedrim when He foretold His glorification, Matt. 26: 64, thus most impressively testifying to them that He who had thus spoken, and whom they had crucified, was actually exalted as He had foretold. He also saw Jesus in His human form—the glorified God-man—Mediator—Surety and Judge.

57. *Cried out.* Rather, *crying out*, with a clamorous shout and tumult. So also it was in the trial of our Lord. Matt. 26: 64, 65. ¶ *Loud voice—great voice.* ¶ *Stopped their ears.* This may

have been the people, but it is more likely to have been the Sanhedrim themselves who led the way. See ch. 23: 7-10. The language of Stephen, just uttered, was regarded as blasphemy, and they stopped their ears to show their abhorrence of such profane language, as they regarded it. ¶ *Ran upon him.* Rather, *rushed upon him—with one accord*—in a mob.

58. *Cast him out.* That is, in the case of a blasphemer the law directed that he should be stoned without the camp, as an accursed thing. Lev. 24: 14; Numbers 15: 35, 36; 1 Kings 21: 31; compare Heb. 13: 12. ¶ *Stoned him.* They proceeded to stone him in the manner prescribed by the law, though this was otherwise an illegal and riotous proceeding. The Jews had no authority to execute capital punishment at this time. John 18: 31. Yet it would seem from this instance and the bloody persecutions that followed, that they did put persons to death, perhaps in the absence of the governor, or in a tumultuous way, without being authorized by the Roman law. This stoning of Stephen must have been by an unlawful proceeding, as there is no appearance of formal sentence, but of summary violence. ¶ *The witnesses.* The law directed that those who bore witness against a criminal should throw the first stone, (Deut. 17: 7,) and if this, which was very large, did not prove fatal, then the whole congregation should join in the stoning. Lev. 24: 16. The law thus compelled those who took the responsibility of giving their witness against a man in a capital crime, to take also the main responsibility of inflicting the capital sentence. This was calculated to make men cautious in bearing such witness. The witnesses *laid down*

• ch. 9:14.  
 Pa. 31:5.  
 Luke 23:46.  
 g ch. 9:40, and  
 20:36, and 21:5.  
 A Matt. 5:44.  
 Luke 6:28, and  
 23:34.

59 And they stoned Stephen •calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, 'receive my spirit.

60 And he •kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

*their clothes*—their loose outer garments, which would be in the way of any active exertion, (Matt. 5:40,) *at a young man's feet*—either in token of his being stationed there as an official personage—perhaps the leading antagonist of Stephen in the controversy with his synagogue—or possibly as a passing incident only, used here by the Spirit to bring first to notice the important character who is soon to figure so largely in the history. The term here for "young man" is applied to persons all along from 24 to 40 years of age. From ch. 22:19, 20, it is inferred that he could not have been younger than 30 at this time, ¶ *Saul*. He was of the tribe of Benjamin, a member of the synagogue of the Cilicians, and having been a student of the law under Gamaliel, was a noted doctor and member of the Sanhedrim. He was high in the confidence of the court, for he received a special commission from them to persecute the Christians. Some understand that Saul himself was a member of the Sanhedrim.

59. *They stoned*. They went on to stone Stephen. This stoning seems to have been without the forms of law—and we find from other passages that the mob were ready to take the law into their own hands, as in the case of our Lord, John 8:59; 10:31, and in the case of Paul afterwards, ch. 21:30, 31. Though the *witnesses* are here spoken of, we have no account of a formal trial and sentence, but only of an arraignment with a view to this, yet terminating in a violent outburst and furious execution. In John 18:31, the Jews declare that they had no legal right to put any man to death: and the tradition is, that about forty years before the destruction of the temple this right was taken away by the Romans. Though there was some show of law, it was only as a pretense, and

their rage did not allow them to wait the formal process. ¶ *Calling*, i. e. *Stephen calling upon and saying* (or invoking, and saying) *Lord Jesus*. Of course the prayer was to the Lord Jesus, to whom the petition, "receive my spirit," is directly addressed; so that it is worse than useless to supply another word, "God." The primitive Disciples are described as "they who call upon this name," (ch. 9:14-21; see 22:16; Rom. 10:12,) and they prayed to Christ as God, the searcher of hearts, ch. 1:24. ¶ *Receive my spirit*. Like his dying Lord, he says, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit," (Luke 23:46.) And what wonder that he should so pray, when he saw the Lord Jesus standing on the right hand of God, crowned with glory and honor. So Paul afterwards expresses himself, 2 Tim. 1:12. Such a believing view of Christ, will always encourage us to die triumphantly. While the stones of the cruel persecutors were falling heavily upon him, and he was mangled by the blows, he sees his way clear to the arms of the risen Lord.

60. *Kneeled down*. Literally, and placing the knees. Ecumenius remarks that "Stephen prayed even more earnestly for them than for himself—for it would seem that he prayed for himself upon his feet, but for his enemies he prayed upon his knees." He may have been brought to this attitude, also, by his failing strength—as he was just ready to expire. ¶ *Lord—Jesus*,—as in the previous verse. ¶ *Lay not—(set not—place not)—set it not down* as a charge against them. This, also, is after the example of the dying Lord: (Luke 23:34,) "Father, forgive them." No example of this last can be found in common history. It belongs to the Christian character to forgive our enemies for Christ's sake.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1 AND <sup>a</sup> Saul was consenting unto his death. And at <sup>a ch. 7: 58, and 21: 20.</sup> that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and <sup>b</sup> they were all scattered <sup>b ch. 11: 19.</sup> abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Some make the word here to mean, "*weigh not out to them (or against them) this sin.*" By the Lord, actions are weighed, 2 Sam. 1: 3; Dan. 5: 27. The Egyptian symbol of justice and judgment is a scale and balance, in which men's actions are weighed. ¶ *Fell asleep.* This, also, properly understood, is the language of Christianity, which reveals death as a sleep to the *Christian*—a "sleep in Jesus," John 11: 11, 12; 1 Cor. 11: 30; 15: 51; 1 Thess. 4: 14; 5: 10. This is not the heathen idea of death, as a sleep to the soul without any awaking—but it belongs to the assured hope of the resurrection of the body. So the early Christians called their burial places *dormitories*—from which we have our word *cemeteries*.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## BOOK II.

THE CHURCH IN ITS TRANSITION FROM  
THE JEWS TO THE GENTILES.

PART I. *Spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem. "Witnesses in all Judea."* A. D. 36-40.

§ 12. SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY WITH-  
OUT THE APOSTLES. Ch. 8: 1-4.

The Church is brought now to a crisis when it is ready to break through its ancient banks, according to prophecy. It is in the conflict of the kingdom of darkness with the kingdom of light, that the latter is to spread abroad. Now we mark the advance of the Church according to the plan indicated by our Lord, ch. 1: 8. Having been "witnesses unto his name in Jerusalem, they are next to be wit-

nesses in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." In the language of Tertullian, "the blood of the martyrs is to be the seed of the Church." The persecution seems to have been aimed especially against the deacons, and we find Philip going out from his charge in the Mother Church, to act in quite another capacity, as an "Evangelist." The Apostles, however, remain behind in Jerusalem, at the very time that the advancing Christianity is to go abroad among the nations. This indicates that for the Jews distinctively the prerogative is giving way, and the Judaic system is, step by step, giving place to that which it all along foreshadowed—calling for a new Apostolate, to the Gentiles, and bringing into use the active work of the entire membership.

1. This clause properly belongs to the former verse. ¶ *Saul.* The narrative takes up the history of Saul, and from ch. 13, follows it alone. ¶ *Consenting.* Not merely consented to his death, but was acting in hearty concurrence with the murderers, approving their conduct. ¶ *Death—violent death*—murder. Paul gives his own narrative of the case, ch. 22: 20; 26: 10. ¶ *At that time.* Literally, *in that day.* This refers to that very day and date, and means that there was at once a general persecution set on foot. It did not stop with Stephen. It was not satisfied with his death, but aimed at exterminating the hated sect, which they saw to be growing so alarmingly. ¶ *The church.* Here first is mentioned "the Church at Jerusalem," which now was to become scattered so as to result in many Churches. As yet the growing thousands of disciples constituted one Church—the Christian



Church at Jerusalem. ¶ *They were all.* Literally, *all were scattered.* This only denotes the general dispersion, not, however, meaning that all actually fled, except the Apostles, but substantially so—as we still read of “the Church” there, (vs. 3.) and of the Disciples and brethren, ch. 9 : 26–30. ¶ *Throughout the regions (countries) of Judea and Samaria*—as is more particularly narrated in the subsequent history. ¶ *Except.* The direction of our Lord had been, “when they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another.” And it would seem that the twelve must have had express direction from God to remain amidst the persecutors for an express object. Probably it was that they might thus guard and strengthen the Mother Church, and from this ancient seat of the holy religion, might set forth an example of a regularly constituted Church, from which the law should go forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Isa. 2 : 3; Micah 4 : 2. It would seem, also, that henceforth in the active extension of the Church among the Gentiles, the old Apostolate is to be cast somewhat into the shade—and a new Apostolate is to be brought forward—that of Paul—and that Philip, not one of the twelve, is to preach at Samaria, and that a very prominent part, also, was to be taken by unofficial disciples, who were chiefly instrumental in gathering the first Gentile Church at Antioch, ch. 11 : 19, 20. The same reason that had led to a careful filling up of the vacancy made by Judas, so as to retain the number of twelve while the Church was yet confined to the Jews, (ch. 1 : 21.) would now warrant this retiring of the twelve to the back ground in the progress of the Church among the Gentiles. They were Divinely appointed to stand in the breach—at that post of special danger and duty. They were charged with foundation-work. They had “*the keys*” given them for opening the kingdom to the world. Their official function was to cease with themselves, upon the full establish-

ment of the Church among the Jews and Gentiles. And this *crisis of transition* required them to remain at the seat of the ancient dispensation as a Divinely constituted authority, to give their sanction to the new movement, as at Samaria, (ch. 8 : 14,) preaching the Gospel also in many villages of the Samaritans, as Peter and John, (ch. 8 : 25,) yet making head-quarters at Jerusalem, and missionating also (as Peter,) throughout all the Jewish Christian Churches, (ch. 9 : 32,) imparting the Spirit also, and working miracles, for the same great object of laying Apostolical foundations for the Church; *setting an example*, also, of the Apostolical work of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, as Peter at Cesarea, (ch. 10 : 34,) and thus introducing the Church of Christ to the world. Besides, they take a leading part in the Synod at Jerusalem for settling great questions at the outstart, (ch. 15.) Now, however, a vacancy is soon to occur, not as that of Judas by suicide, but by martyrdom, in the case of James the brother of John, (ch. 12 : 2,) and we read of no attempt to *fill the vacancy as before*. Now it is made to appear that the Apostles, as such, were to have no successors. And when another Church springs up, besides “the Church at Jerusalem,” viz. “the Church at Antioch,” we find that this first Gentile Church was planted without the Apostles. While it belonged to Peter, “the Apostle of the circumcision,” to have a vision of “the mystery hid from ages, but now revealed unto His holy Apostles and Prophets by the Spirit,” and to enunciate with Divine authority the great principle that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, it was reserved for “*some of*” the dispersion—“men of Cyprus and Cyrene”—to plant the first Church of Gentile Christendom by their “publishing as good news the Lord Jesus”—while the Apostolic Missionary, Barnabas, was sent down thither by the Church at Jerusalem to rejoice with them and join in the good work, and carry it forward with Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles.

2 And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and <sup>e Gen. 23: 2 and 50: 10. 2 Sam. 3: 31.</sup> made great lamentation over him.

3 As for Saul, <sup>d ch. 7: 58 and 9: 1, 13, 21, and 22: 4, and 26: 10, 11. 1 Cor. 15: 9. Gal. 1: 13. Phil. 3: 6. 1 Tim. 1: 13. e Matt. 10: 23, ch. 11: 19.</sup> he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison.

4 Therefore <sup>e</sup> they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

2. The historian proceeds now, in passing, simply to note the honorable attention given to Stephen's body, and the active persecution carried on by Saul. ¶ *Devout men.* These were probably such as were Simeon and Zacharias, (Luke 1: 67; 2: 25,) pious Jews. They had listened to Stephen, but were not yet formally enrolled among the Christians. The foreign Jews, who attended the Pentecost, are so called, ch. 2: 5. This designation is nowhere applied to Christians as such. This incident shows that there was a class of Jews not yet converted to Christ, who held Stephen in high honor and regarded him as innocent. Among such the seed had been sown which would yet spring up, and be gathered in by the Apostles. ¶ *Carried.* Literally, *joined to bear away*, (to the grave.) ¶ *Lamentation.* This was a strictly Jewish practice, which the Christians did not approve, and it strengthens the inference that these devout men were Jews. Literally, the rendering is, *They made a great beating (of the breast) over him.*

3. *As for Saul.* Literally, *But* (at the same time, or on the contrary,) *Saul.* While these pious Jews were bewailing Stephen and joining to give him honorable burial, Saul, on the contrary, was making havoc of—literally, *tearing to pieces, as a wild beast—the church.* The burial and the bitter persecution were going on the same day. ¶ *Entering into.* Rather, *entering*, (as an inquisitor, the houses,) *from house to house.* ¶ *Haling—dragging.* The same term is used by John of dragging the net full of fishes, (ch. 21: 8.) ¶ *Women.* The severity and malice of the persecution are here shown, that the women were also dragged to prison.

15\*

4. *Therefore.* Rather, *then—so then*—connecting with vs. 1, and continuing the narrative of the persecution, in its results for the spread of the Church. ¶ *Went everywhere—went throughout—* went about the districts named, vs. 1, ch. 11: 19, &c. ¶ *Preaching the word.* Literally, *Evangelizing the word.* Publishing it as glad tidings, good news. This was not mentioned as any official preaching, but only such a joyful publishing of the Gospel as belongs to all true believers. Here first the Gospel is called simply "the Word."

§ 13. SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN SAMARIA, BY THE PREACHING OF PHILIP, THE DEACON AND EVANGELIST—FIRST CONFLICT OF CHRISTIANITY WITH PAGANISM—"Witnesses in Samaria." Ch. 8: 5-24.

The history now reaches the ACTUAL TRANSITION of the true religion from Jerusalem to the outside world. Like its Master and Head, it "must needs go through Samaria." (John 4: 4.) As our Lord passed from the Jews to the Samaritans, and thence to the Galileans, so He commanded His Apostles to do. (John 7: 1.) This mixed people formed the bridge between Jews and Gentiles. Christianity must here be promulgated on the way to all nations. The Gospel was to go abroad to the ends of the earth by way of Samaria, as our Lord in His own labors had shown. (John 4: 3, 4.) These, with whom the Jews had no dealings, and who were bitterly hated as a rival sect, had nevertheless a mixture in them of the ancient covenant people, and formed thus the connecting link to the outside world. This is now the *stepping stone* to the progress which Christ's true religion was to make.

*ch. 6:5*

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6 And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

5. *Then Philip.* His work as a deacon in Jerusalem was brought to an end by the dispersion. Now we find him preaching (vs. 12,) and baptizing, and elsewhere he is called "the Evangelist," (ch. 21 : 8.) It cannot be inferred from this that the deacon's office as such was to preach. 1. Because it is not at all included in the reasons for their appointment, but the very opposite is the case. Ch. 6 : 3, 4. They were appointed to serve tables, that so the Apostles might give themselves continually to prayer and the ministry of the word. 2. It cannot be shown that the other deacons preached. 3. The difficulty is settled when we find that he was an "evangelist" as well as a deacon, and this office is recognized. Eph. 6 : 11. The term used for Philip's preaching here is that which is commonly used of official preaching, though it might refer to that "evangelizing" just before spoken of as done by all the Disciples. ¶ *The city of Samaria.* Rather, *A city of Samaria.* This is understood by some as meaning the city of Samaria, but in John, ch. 4 : 5, it means more properly "a city of Samaria," as Shechem, Sychar, now Nablous, between Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. There Christ Himself had sown the good seed, in the conversation with the woman of Samaria at the well of Jacob. See *Notes on John*, ch. 4, and *Appendix*. This people was a mixed race, consisting partly of the Israelites remaining there after the captivity of the ten tribes, and partly of the Assyrian colonists sent there to supply the place of the captives; or, as some think, they were entirely heathen, consisting only of the Assyrians. 2 Kings 17 : 24. They had circumcision. The Apostles had at first been strictly forbidden to enter into any city of the Samaritans. (Matt. 10 : 5.) But now, this was the path which Christianity was to take in passing out beyond Jerusalem. This peo-

ple formed a connecting link between the Jews and the heathen. And so we find a Hellenistic Jew, and not one of the Hebrews, sent down to them. ¶ *Preached Christ.* As Philip is expressly called an evangelist (ch. 21 : 8,) as well as a deacon, (ch. 6 : 5,) there is, of course, no propriety in supposing that it belonged to the office of deacon to preach; but that he did this as an evangelist. Here the work goes forward, not under Apostles, but an Evangelist. He preached, or heralded Christ, announcing that the Messiah had come, and that Jesus of Nazareth was He. The Samaritans, we find from our Lord's interview, (John 4 : 25,) were expecting the Messiah as the Great Prophet promised to come; and though they hated the Jews so as to have no common dealings with them, and had a separate and rival worship on Mount Gerizim, yet Christ Himself had "preached Christ" to them, and had gathered the first fruits of a harvest which His Apostles were to reap. (John 35, 38.) Here, in the progress of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem and Judea, we find the way opened, and the *first great step taken in the development of the universal Christian Church.* NOTE.—The preaching of Christ is the sum of the Gospel message.

6. This remarkable success of Philip's preaching would indicate such a preparation as had been made by Christ's evangelizing work among them. ¶ *The people—(the multitude—the mass)—gave heed—attended to,* as Lydia did to Paul, when her heart was opened, (ch. 16 : 14,) and this they did *with one accord*—generally, and without jarrings. The term here used is that so commonly employed in the early chapters, seeming often to refer to a public assembling. ¶ *Those things*—the doctrine of Christ and his salvation. ¶ *Hearing.* Lit., *In the hearing*—as they were hearing and seeing.



Jacobus' Acts.

(SAMARIA.)



7 For <sup>a</sup>unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came <sup>g</sup> Mark 16: 17. out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which <sup>a</sup> beforetime in the same city <sup>b</sup> used sorcery, and bewitched <sup>h</sup> ch. 13: 6. the people of Samaria, <sup>i</sup> giving out that himself was some <sup>i</sup> ch. 5: 36. great one:

10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.

7. For. Lit., *For from many who had unclean spirits, &c., they came forth.* They were convinced by these miraculous proofs, John 3: 2. ¶ *Crying*—as they did when they bore witness to Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, Mark 3: 11; Luke 4: 41. Sometimes they cried out with rage, see Mark 1: 26; 9: 26. ¶ *Palsies*—*paralyzed*. Here two very severe disabilities are distinguished from demoniacal possessions. This, and other similar passages, disprove the theory of some, that the demoniacal possessions of the New Testament were nothing more than diseases.

8. Great joy. Lit., *There became, or came to be, great joy.* It was the joy predicted by our Lord in His charge to the Disciples, as He looked forward from His own planting in Samaria to their present reaping, when “both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.” See John 4: 36, and *Notes*. It was now the beginning of the joy of tabernacles, at that great harvesting of the outside world that was here only initiated. It was joy in believing, as a fruit of the Spirit, Gal. 5: 22; Rom. 15: 13.

This brings us to a new feature in the History—the FIRST CONFLICT OF CHRISTIANITY WITH PAGANISM.

The narrative now brings to view the fact that the kingdom of darkness is always found rallying in opposition to the kingdom of light. And as it was with the magicians in Egypt against Moses, so is it yet with this magician against Philip—there is a strenuous effort to destroy the good,

or to make a trade of doing the same with their enchantments.

9. Simon. This man is supposed by Neander to be the same as is mentioned by Josephus; but more likely, according to the account of Justin Martyr, he was one born in Samaria, who studied philosophy at Alexandria, and practiced magic arts. In the Apostolic times such sorcery or divination was rife thereabouts, probably on account of the prevalent expectation that some “great power of God” was to arise about that time in the East. So at Ephesus, (ch. 19; 18.) He is said by the Fathers to have originated the Gnostic and other heresies. And so Elymas, (ch. 13: 6.) ¶ *Before time.* Lit., *who was there before in the city*—that is, before Philip’s arrival there. He was already on the ground, and was pre-occupying the minds of the people. ¶ *Used sorcery*—*μαγέων*—*practising magic*—acting the part of a magician. The *Magi* were a class of wise men, sages, philosophers of the East, Persians, Chaldeans, or others, as those who were led to worship the infant Jesus. But this Simon, called Magus, was rather a magician—skillfully imposing on the people. ¶ *Bewitched.* Rather, *Confounded—amazed—startled.* ¶ *The people.* Rather, *The nation.* It would seem that he may have been a wandering juggler, only not without learning and skill. The Samaritans were looking for some new revelations at Christ’s coming, John 4: 26. ¶ *Giving out.* Lit., *Saying that himself was some one great—some great personage,* such as was commonly expected.

10. The people were all giving at-

11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the things \* ch. 1:3. \* concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13 Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized,

tention to Simon, and were believing in him as a sort of Incarnation of God, and this on account of his wonderful works, that seemed to them preternatural. But when Philip came forward and confronted all such jugglery by working real miracles, they all gave heed to him in preference, (6, 7, and 12.) ¶ *From the least.* So universal was the success of Simon's sorceries, in carrying away the people of all classes and ages. ¶ *The great power of God.* Whether this title was drawn from the philosophy of Alexandria, which spake of the *Logos*, and *Sophia*, and *Dunamis*, (the latter term here used,) or whether, as some hold, this refers to the Samaritan belief of a great angel, whom they called "the power of God," is not necessary to determine. It is plain that they regarded him as some one possessed of Divine power, somewhat answering to the common expectations of the Messiah. It is recorded by the Fathers that Simon claimed to be the *Logos*, the *Paraclete*, &c.

11. *Had regard.* Lit., *Gave heed*—attended to—the same term as is used in vss. 10 and 6. This is here repeated to give the reason why they had, up to this time, been followers of Simon—namely, that he had for a long time confounded them, (vss. 9, 10,) and his undisturbed sway for so long a period had established him firmly in the public confidence. ¶ *Sorceries.* Literally, *Magics*.

12. *But.* This spell, however, was broken by the arrival of Philip. This heathenish delusion, under which they lay, was dissipated now, by their belief in Philip and his works and doctrines. They were led to distinguish between the counterfeit and the true. ¶ *Preaching.* Lit., *Evangelizing*—publishing as glad tidings—the things con-

cerning the kingdom of God—namely, the advent of Christ to set up His kingdom, and the principles of His peaceful and spiritual reign, (ch. 1:3.) The Samaritans expected a *Restorer*, whom they spake of as "the Saviour of the world," (John 4:42.) ¶ *The name.* His preaching was a proclamation of the glorious name of Christ—"Jesus," meaning Saviour, and "Christ," meaning Messiah, or anointed. His Person and offices were set forth, and His Gospel in which He makes Himself known. Philip preached the "*Name*" into which they were to be baptized. And now having signified their faith in "this Name," they were led to express and confess it openly in the ordinance of baptism. ¶ *Both men and women.* Unlike the rite of circumcision, which could be administered only to males, the Gospel ordinance extends to both sexes, as the system is intended to be universal, and to embrace all mankind, "where there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Christ Jesus." OBSERVE.—These Gentiles, so called, were much more ready to embrace the Gospel than the Jews. We shall note this feature of things, and while Christ is all along to be preached first to the Jews, they are the last to embrace Him, and at length they are rejected. 13. *Simon.* Lit., *And Simon also himself believed*, as well as the multitude who were, up to this time, his followers. This is plain proof of Philip's wonderful works, that this sorcerer, with all his magic arts, should express his belief in Philip's doctrines and powers, so far as to make an open confession of Christ's name. Of course, there was no real faith in Christ. ¶ *He continued.* Rather, *he was cleaving to him*—in close discipleship, adhering to him. Perhaps his first impulse

He continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the  
† miracles and signs which were done.

† Gr. signs and  
great miracles.

14 Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem  
heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto  
them Peter and John :

15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, <sup>1 ch. 2:38.</sup>  
that they might receive the Holy Ghost :

16 (For <sup>m ch. 19:2.</sup> as yet he was fallen upon none of them : only <sup>n Matt. 28:19.</sup>  
<sup>ch. 2:38.</sup> they were baptized in <sup>o ch. 10:48, and</sup> the name of the Lord Jesus.) <sup>19:5.</sup>

was to cover his defeat by this means. Or he clearly saw that Philip was possessed of wonderful powers, which he could not command, and he may have hoped to get some insight into the secret, as he *wondered, beholding*.—Lit., *And beholding the signs and great miracles which were done, he was confounded*—just as others had been by his pretended miracles, (vss. 9, 11,) where the same word is used. In Simon there was only an apparent believing. It was professed, and we cannot see the heart, nor can we go further than a credible profession. It is plain that his was a mere animal excitement, and no inward spiritual faith. He was moved merely by the signs and wonders, and he was one of those to whom Christ would not commit himself as entitled to any confidence, (John 2 : 24.) He professed his faith in a system which he could not dispute nor rival, hoping perhaps to make capital of it in his own way.

14. *The apostles which were at Jerusalem.* Attention is here called to the fact that the twelve were all there; and that this is a feature of affairs to be noted, as before, (vs. 1,) and in accordance with the plain design of God. Now, behold, under the Gospel, the Jews have dealings with the Samaritans. ¶ *Samaria.* That is, the Samaritans—the people of Samaria. The wonder was that they who were so hostile and hateful to the Jews had received the Gospel, though at first Christ himself had charged the twelve not to enter into any city of the Samaritans with the Gospel message, Matt. 10 : 5, 6. They saw that now, indeed, the true religion had broken

over the ancient banks, and that in this passage of the Gospel to Samaria, a most important event had taken place toward its universal progress. ¶ *Had received.* That is, *joyfully*. ¶ *They sent.* This delegation of two Apostles was plainly to give this movement their Apostolic recognition and sanction as the authorized founders of the Church, and as bound to enter this open door, and to show that the old barriers between Jews and Samaritans were broken down by this religion of love. They came to supervise the progress of Christianity under Philip. ¶ *Peter and John.* The two Apostles who wrought the first Apostolic miracle, (ch. 3 : 1.) They who had followed Christ to His trial, now follow Him to His reward. OBSERVE.—Peter was sent by the body of Apostles. Hence he could not have been chief or primate, as the Romanists assert. He opened the door to those at Pentecost, so also here. This is the last we read of John in the Acts.

15. *When.* Rather, *having come down.* ¶ *Prayed.* This would seem to have been suggested by what they saw on their arrival. This was not any exclusive Apostolic act, or in exercise of any special Apostolic authority. It was in virtue of their common Christian office-work to pray. In vs. 17, they lay on their Apostolic hands. But they sought the power of God upon them—in extraordinary spiritual gifts. This is what is meant by their receiving the Holy Ghost, vs. 17. ¶ *That*—with this purport and object they prayed.

16. This verse is a parenthesis in the sense. *For as yet.* The Holy



p ch. 6: 5, and  
19: 6.  
Heb. 6: 2.

17 Then <sup>17</sup>laid they *their* hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18 And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money.

19 Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.

q Matt. 10: 8.  
See 2 Kings 5: 16.  
r ch. 2: 38, and 10: 45, and 11: 17.

20 But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because <sup>20</sup>thou hast thought that <sup>20</sup>the gift of God may be purchased with money.

Ghost had not yet fallen upon them in any visible manifestations, such as were at Pentecost and were soon after this, apparent, (vs. 18.) They seem generally to have been converted, (vs. 12.) but not to have received the extraordinary gifts which were important to attest their religion among unbelievers. ¶ *Only*. This is all, though commonly the two things went together. ¶ *They were baptized*. Rather, *they stood baptized, or had gotten baptized*. This was their case. They continued thus and no more, as regards any miraculous gifts, ch. 9: 17, 18; 10: 47; 11: 17; 19: 5, 6. ¶ *In the name*. Rather, *into (unto) the name*—unto a professed union with Him—embrace of His doctrines, and subjection to His authority.

17. *Then laid they*. This was done after prayer, as in ch. 13: 3; and the inference is plain, that of itself it conveyed no grace, but was symbolical of a Divine impartation which was to be expected in answer to prayer. It was not to do what Philip could not, but rather to give the work their recognition and sanction, as founders of the Church. It was no ordinance of "confirmation," as a completion of baptism, here or elsewhere. They received miraculous gifts—perhaps that of tongues, or of working miracles, or of prophecy, as an immediate result of the laying on of hands.

18. *Simon saw*, vs. 9. The effects were such as could be *seen*, and of course the spiritual gifts are not here meant. He had seen the miracles, and was awed by them into a kind of outward belief. But now seeing that this wonder-working power could be transferred, he, at

once, without waiting to present himself for this laying on of hands, offered the Apostles money—thinking that they would make merchandise of it, as he desired to do, thus judging the Apostles by himself. He evidently hoped, by falling in with this system, to make capital of it in his way, and practice it only as a higher sort of jugglery. ¶ *Money*. Literally, *moneys*—probably a liberal amount; for he saw how he could make large amounts by this means. From this mercenary proposal has the name of *Simony* been applied to the traffic in Divine things—as the sale of livings in the Church, and Church offices and prerogatives—though this proposal to buy and sell the Holy Ghost is very different.

19. *To me also*—in common with yourselves, that I may exercise the gifts as you do. ¶ *That on whomsoever*. He wishes to purchase the power of imparting these miraculous gifts to whomsoever he pleased.

20. *Thy money*. Literally, *thy silver with thee be for destruction*. This was said as the reply to his impious proposal. Rather than that we should entertain such a base and heinous thought as trafficking in this Divine gift, thy money and thyself be accursed! See Deut. 7: 26; Josh. 7: 15, 24. But it is plain that this was no absolute imprecation, but is qualified by vs. 22. "Repent therefore," &c. ¶ *Because*. This is the iniquity—that he was thinking so blasphemously of the Holy Ghost, as to suppose and intimate by his offer, that what was so essentially a free gift, could be purchased with money, and that *God's* free gift of the Holy Spirit could be

21 Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter : for thy heart<sup>†</sup> is not right in the sight of God.

22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, \*if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be for-<sup>† Dan. 4: 27.</sup>  
<sup>2 Tim. 2: 25.</sup> given thee.

23 For I perceive that thou art in \*the gall of bitterness,<sup>† Heb. 12: 15.</sup> and in the bond of iniquity.

bought with man's filthy lucre—thinking God to be altogether such an one as himself.

21. *Part nor lot.* Thou hast neither part (possession) by purchase, nor by lot—by inheritance or free gift. You neither got it by buying nor by lot. The Apostle thus declares Simon's utter separation from these Divine things, though he had been baptized and was professing experience of them. ¶ *In this matter.* Literally, *in this word*, or *interest*, i. e. of the Holy Ghost. The Apostle was Divinely enabled to understand his true character, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. ¶ *For.* He gives as a reason the real state of Simon's heart, as he was enabled to understand it. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” ¶ *Right.* *Correct—rightly disposed.* ¶ *In the sight of God.* As God sees it—in His presence and estimation.

22. *Repent therefore.* Even for Simon, with all this profane and blasphemous suggestion, there was room for repentance. Hateful and horrid as was his misconception of the truth, the Apostle exhorts him to immediate repentance. His awful state is given as the reason for his repentance of his wickedness. Why it was not allowed to Ananias and Sapphira, we know not, except that their light was greater and their damage done to the Church was more serious. Theirs was pronounced “a lie unto the Holy Ghost.” This was a thought of the heart derogatory to the Holy Ghost. Both were under the temptation of money. ¶ *Of this.* Lit., *from this*—calling attention to this wickedness as an enormity to be repented of before God. ¶ *Pray God.* *Beseech, entreat God.* The Apostles could not grant him absolution or forgiveness. They never claimed to do

it, as their pretended successors profanely do. They exhorted Simon to pray earnestly to God for it; and they clearly intimate to him that the result lies with God alone, and they could not even assure him that forgiveness would be granted at his prayer. ¶ *If perhaps.* This expression denotes uncertainty, yet with some ground for expecting a favorable result, ch. 17 : 27; Mark 11 : 13. This form of expression was used, it would seem, as suited to Simon's presumption that he who had thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money, might not think now that it could be purchased or earned with prayer. ¶ *The thought—the device—purpose—including* all his presumptuous intent, as showing also the depraved state of his heart.

23. *For I perceive.* Lit., *for unto gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity I see thee being.* This is given as the reason why he should at once repent; not as though for this sin alone, but to repent as he had not yet heartily done, for all his sin. The Apostle was divinely enabled to *perceive* or *see* this to be the state of his heart before God. *Steir* takes it to be the Apostle's prediction of Simon's career in future. “*I see thee being for (becoming) gall of bitterness, (to others a poisonous influence,) and bond of iniquity, (a source of iniquitous combination, or a centre of evil associations.)*” But it is more probably the Apostle's inspired view of his present case. ¶ *Gall of bitterness.* The gall, which is the essence of bitterness. The poison of serpents was regarded by the ancients as seated in their gall. The expression would therefore denote his natural and total corruption, Rom. 3 : 14. ¶ *Bond of iniquity.* Tyndale and Cranmer read it—“full of bitter gall,

u Gen. 20: 7-17.

Ex. 8: 8.

Nu. 22: 27-7.

1 Kings 13: 6.

Job 42: 8.

James 5: 16.

24 Then answered Simon and said, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me.

25 And they, when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.

26 And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise,

*and wrapped in iniquity.*" This latter clause has reference to Satan's power over him, 2 Tim. 2: 26—in the bondage of evil—taken captive by Satan at his will. Simon, therefore, was as yet unregenerate. Even Apostolic baptism, we see, was not regeneration.—Josephus speaks of one Simon as a magician after this; and tradition makes this Simon to have been the author of the Gnostic heresy.

24. *Pray ye*—instead of myself. Having no idea of prayer as a Christian exercise, and only impressed with the Apostles' power with God, he naturally enough thinks their prayer will avail more than his. This is the spirit also of Papal superstition, which depends on the intercession of ecclesiastical superiors, and is ready even to buy their prayers for money. ¶ *That none.* He will have them pray, not "that the thought of his heart may be forgiven him," but that the punishment of his sin may not come upon him. He cares only to escape the damage he may have incurred. All his views are mercenary to the last that we read of him. (1) Sinners must pray for themselves. (2) They must pray for forgiveness of sin, as well as for deliverance from punishment. God would have us to be moved by the terrors of the Lord, but we must have a sense of sin such as will lead us to Christ, and make us rejoice in His salvation.

25. *And they*—That is, Peter and John without Philip. ¶ *When they had testified.* Literally, *having testified*—borne witness to the word of the Lord—or, promulgated it as a witness or testimony. See on ch. 2: 40. ¶ *And preached.* Lit., *having spoken* the word of the Lord. ¶ *And preached the Gospel, &c.* Lit., *And evangelized many villages of the Samaritans.* This may

refer to their preaching on their way back to Jerusalem, or to what they did after their return. OBSERVE.—Luke records (Luke 9: 52,) that the same John, on entering a village of the Samaritans and being rejected, proposed to call down fire from heaven upon them, as Elias did. But one of the Parables in which Christ had best delineated Himself, was that of the Good Samaritan, who wrought good deeds to ruined man, when bigot, priest, and Levite turned aside from him.

§ 14. SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY BEYOND THE HOLY LAND—ETHIOPIAN EUNUCH — CEREMONIAL DISABILITIES REMOVED. Ch. 8: 26-40.

The progress of Christianity is still onward, traveling in the very path marked out by Christ Himself, and indicated also by the prophets. Having passed from Jerusalem to all Judea and Samaria, it now advances beyond the Holy Land, and takes another step toward the uttermost parts of the earth. Isaiah had prophesied also of this latter time, when the devout Eunuch, who had been excluded as a class from the congregation of the Lord, should no longer say, "I am a dry tree," but should be made a member of a great and blessed family, (Isaiah 56: 3, 4.)

26. *And the angel.* Lit., *an angel.* The Apostles having departed, this Divine messenger addressed Philip. The ministration of angels is elsewhere employed in the outset of the Church, ch. 5: 19; 10: 3; 12: 7; 27: 23. This occurred in Samaria. A special command was necessary for Philip to go on, so soon beyond Samaria. ¶ *Arise.* *Rise up*—with reference to going forward to a further work. ¶ *Go. Proceed*—journey onward from Samaria.

and go towards the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.

27 And he arose and went: and, behold, <sup>a</sup> man of <sup>z</sup> Zeph. 3: 10. Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and <sup>y</sup> had come to Jerusalem for to worship, <sup>y</sup> John 12: 20

¶ *Towards the south.* This was the course which Philip was to take to strike the road from Jerusalem to Gaza by a shorter way than through Jerusalem. Gaza was about sixty miles south-west from Jerusalem. It was a very ancient city, mentioned in Gen. 10: 19, a city of the Philistines, lying on the confines of Egypt and at the end of the desert route from Cairo, not far from the coast, near Askelon; and one of the five chief Philistine cities. Samson carried away its gates. Judges 16: 2, 3. ¶ *Which is desert.* Rather, *it is desert*, or *this is desert*, (not *the desert one*.) This is added to designate this particular road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. It may have been added by the angel, and if so, it was to describe to Philip the road on which he would find the eunuch. Or, if inserted by Luke, it would signify to the reader the kind of road where the event occurred, yet not necessarily to distinguish it from other roads thither. Dr. Robinson has remarked that one of these roads, viz., through Wady El Musurr to Eleutheropolis and thence to Gaza, does pass through *desert*—that is, through a tract of unsettled country inhabited only by the nomadic Arabs. It is plain that *Gaza* is not referred to as *desert*, since it was the *road* that was to be described as the scene of Philip's labor, and not the city; and it would be nothing to the purpose in this brief instruction to Philip to tell him that Gaza was desert, since he was not to go to Gaza but only to the road that led thither. Besides, Gaza was not destroyed till about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, and after the date of this history.

27. Philip obeyed the very letter of the command. ¶ *And behold.* As much as to say, though this road was "a desert one," where he could scarcely have expected to meet any traveller,

behold this Ethiopian. Literally, *a man—an Ethiopian*. This country was the ancient Cush of the Old Testament, and corresponds with the district now known as *Nubia*, together with the adjoining parts of Abyssinia. ¶ *An eunuch.* As this man was an officer of state to a female sovereign, it is most probable that this term is intended to designate a literal eunuch. Throughout the East it was customary to employ such mutilated men as attendants of females, and such is the custom still. It often means a *chamberlain*, or state officer, and is thought by many to mean this here; especially as, according to the law, Deut. 23: 1, an eunuch was excluded from the congregation of the Lord. But it may include both meanings. He was probably a state officer and an eunuch, as was often the case. He was also a Gentile proselyte, as we suppose; possibly a foreign Jew. *Baumgarten* thinks that there is no difficulty in supposing that so zealous a Gentile was admitted into the congregation of Israel, even against the letter of the law, as was indeed the case in the instance of *Ebed-melech*, the Ethiopian. Jer. 38: 7-13; 39: 16-18. But may he not have been "a worshiper of God," as Cornelius was "a devout man" in that sense, though excluded by this physical disability, as the uncircumcised Gentiles were.—This event is introduced just here in the history as another important step in the breaking down of the old partition walls. It was now to be shown that not only distinctions of nation, as in case of Samaritans, were to be no longer any barriers to admission into the Church, but those physical disabilities which had excluded persons under the old economy were not to be a bar to Christian privileges. Isaiah (56: 3,) foresees this very state of things when "the eunuch shall no

28 Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet.

29 Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.

30 And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest?

31 And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

longer say I am a dry tree," but shall be introduced to higher household relations in the family of Christ, better than the relation of sons and daughters. Hence, he is expressly distinguished by Isaiah from "the son of a stranger," as of a distinct class. ¶ *Of great authority.* A potentate—an officer of high rank and power. ¶ *Candace.* This was the royal name of the Ethiopian queens in the island of Meroe, in the upper Nile, as "*Pharaoh*" was the name of the kings. ¶ *Who had the charge.* Literally, *who was (upon or) over.* ¶ *All her treasure.* This is a Persian term, applied to royal treasures. ¶ *Had come to Jerusalem to worship*—and from this we infer that if a Gentile, he was at least a "devout Gentile." He had probably been up to one of the great festivals at Jerusalem. ¶ *Was returning.* He was on his way home to Egypt, and the direct route was then probably, as it is now, by way of Gaza, and the short desert route of twelve days to Cairo. ¶ *In his chariot.* Of course, therefore, he had attendants suited to his rank. ¶ *Esaias.* The prophecy of Isaiah. He was probably reading the Greek translation, as the Septuagint was commonly used by the Jews in foreign countries, and was made in Egypt.

29. *The Spirit.* This was more than an inward influence. It was a personal communication, which Philip would recognize as such; just as in vs. 26, it was "an angel of the Lord." He was conscious of being instructed by the Holy Spirit to do this particular thing. ¶ *Go near and join thyself—go unto and cleave to this chariot.* The idea is expressed that he should go up to the chariot and attach himself to it.

OBSERVE.—Now that the Gospel is to go abroad to the world, the Spirit of God appears prominently as the personal Dispenser of affairs on earth. It is "the ministration of the Spirit." See John 14; 2 Cor. 3:8.

30. *Ran thither.* Some suppose that it was at the junction of the road from Samaria with the road from Jerusalem, that Philip came upon the chariot, and was instructed at the moment of his coming in contact with it. The eunuch had probably seen something of the persecutions in Jerusalem, and heard of the controversies about Jesus as Messiah, and was likely enough searching the Messianic passages. ¶ *Heard him read.* It was common at the East to read aloud even in private. ¶ *Understandest thou.* Literally, *Yea, but knowest thou what thou readest?* The two verbs here used are closely allied, one being a compound form of the other, making it thus more expressive.

31. *How can I.* Literally, *for how could I?—how would I be able?* It is a reason given to the negative implied in the question preceding; and it is given in a tone of humbleness and teachableness. ¶ *Guide me.* Literally, *lead me in the way.* Little did he dream that God was ready to guide him by "an angel," and *the Spirit.* He seems to intimate his hope that this stranger may be the very guide he needs. Doubtless the mind of the eunuch was prepared by the same Spirit who directed Philip to him. ¶ *He desired.* This is the verb from which the term "*Paraclete*" is taken. It means to call to one's side and aid. This request shows plainly his desire to know the truth, and his anxiety to be in-

32 The place of the scripture which he read was this,  
 "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb <sup>a Isa. 53:7, 8.</sup>  
 dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth:

33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who  
 shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of  
 whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some  
 other man?

35 Then Philip opened his mouth, <sup>a Luke 24:27.</sup>  
 and began at the <sup>ch. 18:28.</sup>  
 same scripture and preached unto him Jesus.

36 And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain

structed. "Then shall ye know, if ye  
 follow on to know the Lord. His go-  
 ing forth is prepared as the morning."

32. *The place. Now the passage of  
 the Scripture which he was reading was  
 this—or, the section of the Scripture which  
 he read was this.* The quotation is al-  
 most word for word from their Greek  
 version of Isa. 53:7, 8. ¶ *He was  
 led.* That is, the servant of Jehovah  
 —the Messiah—as was admitted by  
 the Jews before the coming of Christ.  
 But after Christ came they sought to  
 refer it to divers persons, and to any  
 other than Christ. This passage de-  
 scribed prophetically the voluntary  
 sufferings of Christ, and not merely His  
 uncomplaining submission.

33. *In his humiliation, &c.* Our ver-  
 sion of the Hebrew is, "He was taken  
 from prison and from judgment,"  
 which might be rendered, "*from* or  
 through violence and punishment, he  
 was taken away." This is substan-  
 tially the sense as given here, while  
 the idea is expressed that in the hu-  
 miliation (contempt or ignominy) which  
 He suffered, all justice was denied Him  
 at His trial. ¶ *And who shall declare,*  
 &c. Who shall properly describe the  
 wicked, "untoward" generation among  
 whom He lived?—the impiety of those  
 Jews who persecuted Him to the death?  
 Others think it was a call for witness-  
 es to His character at the trial. ¶ *For  
 his life.* Their wickedness was such  
 as to seek His life, and not be satisfied  
 till it was taken away.

34. The eunuch's desire was to  
 know to whom this passage referred.  
 This was, indeed, the vital point in the

controversy of that time, whether these  
 and such like prophecies referred to  
 Jesus as the Messiah, or to some other  
 person. The Jews had held that they  
 referred to the Messiah before Christ  
 came. But when He came, and they  
 were pressed with these predictions as  
 fulfilled in Christ, they sought to in-  
 vent other applications, as to Isaiah  
 and to the Jewish people. The eu-  
 nuch asks if the reference could have  
 been to Isaiah, or to some other per-  
 son.

35. Philip, of course, pointed out  
 the reference to Jesus as the Messiah,  
 and went on from this to other passa-  
 ges of the Old Testament, showing that  
 "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit  
 of prophecy." ¶ *Preached unto him.*  
 Lit., *Evangelized to him* Jesus—preach-  
 ed to him the good tidings of Jesus,  
 showing that Jesus of Nazareth was  
 such an one as the prophecy contem-  
 plated, and that He was the fulfillment  
 of all these Messianic predictions.  
 Thus it is that sincere inquirers after  
 Divine truth will be furnished with  
 Divine helps suited to their case.  
 When men are prepared by the Spirit  
 for the embrace of His truth, other  
 men or means are directed by the same  
 Spirit, to give them the needed light.

36. *A certain water.* Literally, *Soma  
 water.* As the road was "*desert*"—  
 and for the most part destitute of  
 water, their coming upon this water  
 suggests to the eunuch the opportuni-  
 ty of professing his faith. But how  
 did the eunuch know of baptism as  
 necessary? In the previous context  
 of this verse which the eunuch was

<sup>b</sup> ch 10:47.

<sup>c</sup> Matt. 28: 19.  
<sup>d</sup> Mark 16: 16.  
<sup>e</sup> Matt. 16: 16.  
<sup>f</sup> John 6: 69, and  
 9: 35-38, and 11:  
 27.  
<sup>h</sup>. 9: 20.  
<sup>i</sup> John 4: 15,  
 and 5: 5-13.

water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; <sup>b</sup> what doth hinder me to be baptized?

37 And Philip said, <sup>c</sup> If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, <sup>d</sup> I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him.

reading, and which Philip would be led to expound, is a distinct reference to baptism, and even to the mode of it. "So shall He *sprinkle* many nations," ch. 52: 15. This is a natural way of accounting for the eunuch's request, and Philip would not surely have used a mode contrary to that marked out in the prophetic passage. Dr. Thomson of Syria says—"The Wady Surar, which flows during the summer, was entirely dry in the month of April, at which time the transaction took place, I suppose. I know of no brook on the route from Bethshemesh to Gaza, but there may be one."—*The Land and the Book*, p. 310. ¶ See *here*. Lit., *Lo, water*—as if it was an unexpected sight. But the means for obeying Christ's commands are found just when and where they can be used. OBSERVE.—They who truly believe in Christ will seek to profess Christ, and their faith in Him, publicly.

37. Though this verse is not found in some ancient manuscripts, it is found in others, and is quoted by Cyprian, &c. It may have been very early omitted to get rid of its testimony against delaying baptism, which was becoming common in the latter part of the third century. Or, as others suppose, it may have been added for opposite reasons, or as favoring forms of profession in administering the Sacrament. But in either case, it may be safely retained, as teaching only what is implied in the whole narrative, and amply taught elsewhere. Faith in Jesus Christ, and faith with all the heart, is required of any one who presents himself for baptism. And we are baptized in the Name which we profess. ¶ *Jesus Christ, &c.* This belief in the Divinity and

Messiahship of Jesus was understood as involving a full profession of Christ. (1 John 5: 1.)

38. *Commanded*. The eunuch commanded the charioteer to stop the chariot. ¶ *They went down both into the water*. The preposition here used and rendered *into*, is that which expresses *motion to a place, or direction whither* — *eis* (unto) — and *terminating at*. So in vs. 40, "*Was found* (carried away as far as) *at Azotus*." There is another preposition for expressing *rest in a place, (in—ev)* as where the angel went down into (*ev*) the water. John 5: 4. But where it is, "Go wash in (at) the pool of Siloam," (John 9: 7,) and the washing of the eyes seems referred to, it is *eis*. If it were intended to convey the idea of "under" the water, there is another preposition which would express it (*υπο*.) The most that is said is, that they went down both unto or into the water. We may infer that they both entered into the water. This was most natural in a country where they wore sandals, and where it was no inconvenience, but a luxury, to step into the water. Dr. Robinson understands that they descended into the valley where the water was. But there would be no difficulty in supposing that they both went into the water (ankle deep, for instance, or more,) for the greater convenience of sprinkling or pouring, in the baptismal ceremony. But it is not said that either went *under* the water. And it is twice said that *both went into* (unto) the water. So that if this phrase teaches that *one* was immersed, it teaches that *both* were immersed. The terms here used do not point out at all the mode of baptism. ¶ *Baptized him*.

39 And when they were come up out of the water • the Spirit of the Lord caught away Phi'ip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.

40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.

Philip baptized, not as a Deacon, but as an Evangelist—as he preached, also, by virtue of this latter office, (ch. 21: 8.) It is expressly repeated that *both* “went down into the water,” inasmuch as only one returned to the chariot.

39. *Come up.* As we have just remarked, we may admit that they both went down into the water. That proves nothing about the mode of baptism any more than their coming out does. The most that can be made of the terms here used, is that “*they came up from* (or, *out of*) *the water*,” but with a reference to the previous expression. As opposed to *ev*, it would signify *out of*—as opposed to *eis*, it means *from*; yet carrying with it the idea of coming from immediate contact with the water, yet not at all of coming *from under* the water. ¶ *Caught away.* It is plainly implied here, that this was a miraculous removal of Philip by the Divine Spirit. It is surely not a mere impression on the mind, or a passing impulse, that is here intended. It indicates a personal seizure, as in divers other passages. It may have been so ordered for the purpose of confirming the eunuch's faith by miracle. Similar instances may be found in 1 Kings 18: 12; 2 Kings 2: 16; Ezek. 3: 12; 8: 3. Though the eunuch saw him no more, he did not go in search of him, but was so filled with pleasure and satisfaction with what he had learned of Christ, that he went on his way rejoicing. Bengel says that “by a like mode of transit, one or two of the Apostles may have reached even America, if no other way was open to them.” OBSERVE.—(1) The same Spirit who expressly directed Philip to take that road, caught him away. (2) Those who have truly found Christ, have peace; and can rejoice in Him, and go on their way rejoicing, even though they may have lost their hu-

16\*

man teacher. “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed,” (1 Cor. 3: 5.)

(3) The Abyssinians hold that their Church was founded by this convert, whom they name *Indich*. That Church is said still to retain an orthodox confession of faith. Neander, p. 89, and note.

40. The language here shows plainly that a miracle was wrought, and that Philip, who was caught up on the road to Gaza, was found at Azotus, thirty-four miles north, not in any ordinary way of travel, but as the result of this miraculous conveyance. ¶ *At.* He was found (carried away) unto—as far as—Azotus. ¶ *Azotus—Ashdod*—a seaport between Gaza and Joppa, of some importance on the Philistine coast. It now is called *Usdu*. It was one of the five capital cities of the Philistines, Josh. 13: 3; 1 Sam. 6: 17. It was famous for the idol Dagon. ¶ *To Cesarea.* The road led through Ekron, Ramah, Joppa and the plain of Sharon, to *Cesarea*. In this city the Roman procurator of Judea resided. It was named from Augustus Cæsar, in whose honor it was built by Herod. It lies on the sea coast, about sixty miles north-west of Jerusalem. It was chiefly inhabited by Gentiles. Philip seems to have made this city the centre and head-quarters of his missionary work. He is mentioned only once after this, and then he is still at this same city, and Paul is entertained by him in the bosom of his family. Ch. 21: 8. We visited the ruins, which consist of a solid mole of stone work, and broken columns standing and lying about the shore, with no solitary inhabitant. OBSERVE.—(1) The eunuch made use of all the means furnished him under the Old Testament, and in their use he was blessed with a discovery of Christ. (2) Reading the Scrip-



## CHAPTER IX.

oh. 8. 3.  
Gal. 1. 13.  
1 Tim. 1. 13.

1 AND \*Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest.

tures with humbleness and teachableness, was blessed with a fuller revelation. (3) The Scriptures contain the perfect warrant of a sinner's hope—Faith credits and relies on it. (4) Obedience to God in the most dark and difficult things, results here in Philip's being caught away somewhat like Elijah, in a chariot of God. "Blessed be God," says *Burkitt*, "for the ministry of His holy angels."

## CHAPTER IX.

§ 15. CONVERSION AND CALL OF SAUL OF TARSUS.—HIS FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM—A. D. 37-40. *Damascus*. Ch. 9: 1-30.

The Gospel has now been introduced to the *half-way* Gentiles, by the labors of Philip at Samaria, and to the Ethiopian who was also an eunuch. But these instances seem to be given rather as signs of the glorious future; as hints of what was shortly to come to pass. We are brought now to the immediate preparation for the actual introduction of the Church to the Gentile world. In order to this, a new Apostle was to be raised up, to be specially commissioned to the Gentiles, and to have the ordering and care of the Gentile Churches. This history is given, vss. 1-30. At the same time it is to be shown that the same crisis—the persecution of Stephen—which first brought Saul to view, the future Apostle to the Gentiles—resulted, also, in the dispersion of the Jewish Christians, and the establishment of Christian Churches among the Jews in different parts of Judea, under Peter. These two aspects of affairs, are given together in order to a comprehensive view of this juncture. Though the Gospel is to go to the Gentiles, yet the Jews are not to be overlooked. Peter's labors are re-

corded as successful in that direction, while the new Apostolate of Paul is to be raised up for the new and wider field. It will soon appear that the Gentiles are not to come into the Church through the door of Judaism—and that the Jewish Christian Church here noted, is not the type for the great universal Church of the future. In the subsequent chapter, (10,) Cornelius is to be brought forward as the first formal instance of a Gentile brought into the Church without passing through the door of Judaism.

1. The narrative now having given the immediate fruits of the dispersion in the labors of Philip, starts from the same point (ch. 8: 3,) to give the different part which Saul takes in the dispersion. He had already been introduced as making havoc of the Church, (8: 3,) and now he is presented to us as *still* animated with the same ferocious purpose. ¶ *Breathing out*. Rather, *breathing*. This was his SPIRIT. As we say of a man, his words "breathe" love—this is the spirit of his language. So here Saul, in every word and action *breathed* nothing but ferocity. ¶ *Threatenings*. Rather, *threatening*—fierce menacing, (in malice and rage.) ¶ *Slaughter*—murder. This is what he breathed. Every breath was full of threat and intent of murder. Those against whom he so violently raved are noted as "*the disciples of the Lord*"—the followers of Jesus Christ—Christians. In this spirit he went, (literally, *going* as of his own motion.) ¶ *To the high priest*—the president of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, who was the supreme officer of the highest religious court of Judea, and whose ecclesiastical authority extended even "to strange cities," as Damascus. It was probably *Theophilus*, the brother and successor of Jonathan, successor of Caiaphas.

2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any <sup>† Gr. Of the way:</sup> of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. <sup>So ch. 19: 9, 20.</sup>

2. *Desired.* This shows the zeal of Saul in this persecution—that he *prayed of him* (literally,) *letters*—namely, official dispatches—letters of authority and commission to this work—in the name of all the Sanhedrim, ch. 22: 5. ¶ *Damascus.* This most ancient city, the capital of Syria, known as early as the time of the Patriarchs and “Eleazer of Damascus,” (Gen. 14: 15,) was inhabited by large numbers of Jews, as well as Greeks and Syrians. The Jewish interest was so extensive there as to warrant the deputation of such an one as Saul to look after it, especially when so many Jewish Christians were escaping thither to carry the leaven of their Gospel principles. It is about five to six days’ journey, or one hundred and thirty miles north-east of Jerusalem. We came upon it, after a hot journey on the desert plain which borders it from the south. From seeing here and there an oasis, one vast ocean of verdure broke upon our view in that surrounding wilderness; and soon we came upon the thick foliage—the bowers of trees and the rich lawns which skirt the city. And soon in the gardens and vales we saw the secret of all this verdure in the rushing streams of the Barrada, or Pharphar, which irrigate the plain. The city is built chiefly of stone, stuccoed, has two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, of whom seventy thousand are Christians of the Greek and Syrian Churches. The mosques, with their glistening domes and spindling minarets, give a very picturesque view to the city. The English Hotel is in the street which is yet called “*Straight*,” (vs. 11.) The bazaars are extensive, and supplied by caravans with the richest goods from Persia and India. The walls of the city are massive, but have been severely battered in the assaults of Ibrahim Pasha and others. Some of the dwellings of very wealthy Jews were visited

by us. As it was the season of Passover, we found the inmates in their richest dress—ladies glistening with diamonds—the men reading their Psalters. We endeavored to tell in Hebrew our route from Jerusalem, and our object, nation, &c., and were well received. The female portress (John 18: 17,) showed us in and out for a customary fee. Josephus speaks of ten thousand, and of eighteen thousand Jews being massacred at different times in insurrections while Nero was Emperor. The houses are built in the oriental style—an open square—a small door in the street-wall opening to the vestibule leading to the court, in which is a fountain, with trees planted round it. ¶ *To the synagogues.* These were the strongholds of the Jewish religion, and their officers would be ready to aid in such an exterminating work. The presidents of the synagogues would acknowledge the orders of the Sanhedrim, and the Ethnarch would allow their authority in religious matters. The city was subject to the Romans under Pompey, B. C. 64, but we find it in the hands of Aretas, king of Arabia Nabatea, shortly after this time. ¶ *Of this way.* Lit., *any who were of the way*—the Christian way—of thinking and living, Ps. 67: 3, or of salvation, ch. 16: 17. ¶ *Men or women.* It is thrice repeated that Saul’s bitterness was such that he included even the women in his search and severity, ch. 8: 12. ¶ *Bound.* Julius Cæsar and Augustus decreed that the Sanhedrim, as the highest court among the Jews, should have authority in religious matters, to bring Jews from foreign cities, for trial at Jerusalem. *Biscoe*, ch. 6, part 2. Saul must have had a large escort, for such a purpose. The Romans permitted these outbreaks for political reasons, as in the case of Christ and of Stephen; and so it occurred that Jews and Gentiles

b ch. 22: 6,  
aud 26: 17.  
1 Cor. 15: 8.

3 And <sup>b</sup>as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:

4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, <sup>c</sup>why persecutest thou me?

5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord

conspired against both the Master and His followers. There were Christians there from Pentecost probably, and from Stephen's persecution, vs. 13.

3. This account of Saul's conversion given by Luke agrees in substance with the two other accounts given by Paul himself, ch. 22: 1-6; 26: 9-18. ¶ *As he journeyed.* Lit., *In the act of journeying it occurred that he drew near,* &c. He probably traveled by the route which is yet taken, and which we took, by way of Tiberias, Cesarea Philippi, &c. ¶ *Shined around.* Lit., *Flashed around* (as lightning.) Paul further states that it was at mid-day, and that it shone above the brightness of the sun. Of course, it could not have been mere lightning, as some would try and maintain in order to escape the miracle. The spot was pointed out to us by our guide, where tradition has located it, not far from the Jerusalem gate. And over the gate is a window built in the wall, like that from which Paul was afterwards let down in a basket, (vs. 25.) ¶ *A light.* This is never the expression used to describe lightning, but it denotes "the glory of the Lord"—the Shechinah or visible symbol of the Divine Presence. Stephen saw it, ch. 7: 55.

4. *Fell to the earth.* The general supposition is that he was on horseback, and this language would agree with that opinion. Besides, it would be fair to infer that he would make all haste in his pursuit. Such vivid impressions of the Divine glory have brought others to the ground, Daniel 10: 8; Job 42: 5, 6; Rev. 1: 17. ¶ *Heard a voice.* That is, he heard the words as afterwards given, though these words were for him only, and it was part of the miracle that those who were with him heard not the voice but saw the light, ch. 22: 9. This voice

spoke in the Hebrew tongue, ch. 26: 14. ¶ *Saul.* "It is a remarkable, undesigned coincidence, that the form *Σαούλ* should have been preserved in this account, and rendered in Greek in the translation of Saul's speech in ch. 22."—*Alford.* ¶ *Why persecutest.* This agrees with our Lord's description of the final judgment. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me," (Matt. 25: 40;) Isa. 63: 9; Zech. 2: 8. Jesus here appeared to Saul doubtless, (vss. 17, 27; 26: 16,) for here he "saw the Lord," (1 Cor. 9: 1,) and this revelation to him of the great truth that Christ and His members are one, and that the Church is His body, deeply impressed him, so that he afterwards, in his Epistles, especially insists on this doctrine, (Eph. 1: 8; 1 Cor. 12: 6.) There is a plain similarity in the appearing to Stephen and to Saul. Saul heard Stephen's words and esteemed them blasphemy, (ch. 7: 56.) He now beholds the sight, and probably associates it at once with the death of Stephen, and feels alarm. OBSERVE.—(1) How tender is this expostulation. How it opens the heart of Christ toward His people, identifying Himself with them as afflicted in all their affliction, (Isa. 63: 9; Zech. 2: 8; Matt. 25: 40,) and toward the persecutor, stooping to reason with him as to "*why*" he so treats Him. (2) Saul's conversion was not miraculous in any such way as to dispense with means—the truth was preached and urged, and motives were presented.

5. *Who art thou?* This is the language of surprise. Already he knew enough to indicate who He was. The point of his exclamation was this, Is it so? Can it be that this Jesus, lately crucified and buried, is ALIVE and

said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest : <sup>4</sup> *it is hard for* <sup>4 ci. 5: 39.</sup> thee to kick against the pricks ?

6 And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, <sup>6 Luke, 3: 10.</sup> what wilt thou have me to do ? And the Lord *said* unto him, <sup>ch. 2: 37, and 16, 30.</sup> Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

7 And <sup>7 Dan. 10: 7</sup> the men which journeyed with him stood <sup>See ch. 22: 9, and 26: 13.</sup> speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man.

clothed with Divine power ? Hence he acknowledges Him as "*Lord.*" ¶ *I am Jesus.* Christ at once reveals Himself to the terrified man. His fears were powerful with him. But this name "*Jesus*" was more than a mere surname. It was significant. It meant Saviour. Christ revealed Himself here not as anointed, (Messiah—Christ,) but as Saviour. This is His grace even to His persecuting foes. And so at once the persecution is set in contrast with the grace. Besides, this Jesus was the one lately put to death. Is He, indeed, risen ? If so, this seals His commission and claims. If so, then Saul sees himself condemned at the bar of God, and struggling against his Almighty Friend and Saviour. ¶ *It is hard—painful.* How tender ! He says not, It is hard for thee to *do*, but it is hard for thee to *bear*. Not, "*It is hard for me,*" but "*It is hard for thee.*" What pity for His enemies ! ¶ *Pricks—goads.* Sharp iron points with which the rods or staves were armed for driving oxen. The more one kicks, like a foolish and fractious animal, against these sharp spikes, the more must he be lacerated. This expresses that impotent rage that wounds itself instead of its object. This last clause is thought by some to have been added here from ch. 26: 14.

6. *And he.* Saul evidently saw the Lord, as well as heard Him, on this occasion. See vs. 13; ch. 22: 14; 26: 16; and Jesus appeared to him in bodily person. It was the requisite for an Apostle, that he had seen the Lord. And on this occasion doubtless Jesus re-  
 cited to him that which Paul delivered to the Corinthian Church, (1 Cor. 11 :

23.) about His betrayal, the last supper, &c. ¶ *Trembling, &c.* No wonder : if Christ was thus alive, and dealing with him in such love. ¶ *What wilt thou.* He was convicted—convinced—converted. He asks now only to know the will of his Lord. His desire is converted. His heart is changed. Where there is this sincere question as the principle of daily living, there is the new nature. Self-will subdued, the Divine will consulted and delighted in, and an earnest active prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven." ¶ *Arise and go.* That is, into the city of *Damascus*, near which they were, vs. 3. ¶ *Shall be told thee.* No sincere inquirer after duty will be left without information and direction. The light upon one's course does not always, nor commonly, come all at once, but gradually often.

7. *The men.* Probably persons attending him as aids in his commission from the chief priests. ¶ *Stood speechless.* In ch. 26: 14, it is said they fell to the ground—and here what is meant is, that they were speechless—without reference to their posture. Though they first fell to the ground, they doubtless soon arose, and stood silent with awe. ¶ *Hearing a voice.* That is, hearing a sound of a voice, but not so hearing as to distinguish what was spoken. See John 12: 28, 29. ¶ *Seeing no man.* He saw the glorious Person of the Lord Jesus, and his eyes were closed for the glory of the vision, ch. 22: 11; but the rest of the company saw no man—and he saw no one when his eyes were opened, for he was blind after the dazzling brightness, vs. 8.

8 And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus.

9 And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.

10 ¶ And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, <sup>ch. 22: 12.</sup> named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord.

11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas <sup>ch. 21: 39, and 22: 3.</sup> for one called Saul, <sup>h</sup> of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth.

8. *Arose.* Rather, *was raised*. ¶ *Opened.* His eyes having been opened, after the dazzling effect of the light. ¶ *Saw no man.* This may mean that he was so blinded by the supernatural brightness of Christ's revelation to him, that he could not see any one, or anything—though his eyes were opened—or it may mean that after his eyes were opened the person whom he had seen had disappeared. But this last does not agree so well with vs. 9, where it appears that he was sightless during three days; so that he needed to be led by the hand into the city. Therefore this clause is only another way of recording the fact that he was blind. See ch. 22: 11.

9. *Three days.* This was a miraculous sign to Saul himself. The vision was especially for him, and this effect was for his special warning and conviction. ¶ *Neither eat, &c.* It would seem that he fasted entirely—being so stunned and overcome as to be indifferent to the use of food. The Jews, however, reckoned the parts of two days with one intervening, as three days. Some understand this period of time to have had a reference to our Lord's time in the grave, and Jonah's in the whale's belly, Jon. 1: 17; Matt. 12: 39, 40.

10. *Ananias.* He was a *disciple*—a believer in Christ, who was converted from Judaism, ch. 22: 12, residing in Damascus, but present perhaps at the Pentecost in Jerusalem, or converted afterwards. He was not alone of the disciples in Damascus. ¶ *In a vision.* Both Ananias and Saul were prepared for each other by a vision, as Cornelius and Peter were ch. 10. So God con-

trols human hearts. By a *vision* is here meant a Divine message or revelation, or a communication made by a speaker seen in vision. ¶ *Behold me.* Literally, *Lo I, Lord*: the Hebrew form of reply to a personal salutation of a superior.

11. *The street.* Such a street still called "Straight," is well known in Damascus, running through the city in a direct line from east to west. On it is the English Hotel, frequented by English-speaking travelers, and it runs to the great bazaars, and is about three miles long, and the best and most public street in the city. The site of the house of Judas here mentioned was pointed out to us, but only as it has been located by tradition, without any solid grounds, as we suppose. "The house of Ananias" we also visited, descending by twelve or fifteen steps to a grotto with a rocky roof; the light admitted from above in the modern inclosure, which is a Romish chapel. It is on a narrow lane, some two hundred yards to the right of the street called Straight. ¶ *Tarsus.* Here Saul is for the first time called Saul of Tarsus—or literally, *Saul the Tarsean*. This city was the capital of Cilicia, the south-east province of Asia Minor, on the banks of the river Cydnus, which flowed through the city. It was celebrated for its schools of philosophy, and was even a rival of Athens and Alexandria. It was here that Saul received the education of his boyhood. It was a free city, that is, had its own municipal government, though subject to Rome. It has now some twenty thousand inhabitants. ¶ *He prayeth.* This is

12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight.

13 Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, <sup>1</sup>how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem :

14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all <sup>2</sup>that call on thy name.

15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way : for <sup>1</sup>he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before <sup>2</sup>the Gentiles, and <sup>3</sup>kings, and the children of Israel :

1 vs. 1.  
2 vs. 21.  
ch. 7:59, & 22:16  
1 Cor. 1:2.  
2 Tim. 2:22.  
1 ch. 13:2, and  
22:21, & 26:17.  
Rom. 1:1.  
1 Cor. 15:10.  
Gal. 1:15.  
Eph. 3:7, 8.  
1 Tim. 2:7.  
2 Tim. 1:11.  
m Rom. 1:5, and  
11:13.  
Gal. 2:7, 8.  
n ch. 25:22, and  
23, and 26:1, &c.

what he was doing, and this was a clear evidence of a changed heart and life. Ananias would have rather expected to hear it said, "For *behold he persecuteth*," but instead of this it is, "behold he prayeth." As a Jew he had prayed, and prayed much and long, but the intimation is here, he prayeth *to me*, and prayeth especially and in reality. Besides, it was in the way of his praying thus that he saw the vision, &c. which gave him comfort and led him to the light. "Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find."

12. *In a vision.* The particular time and further details of this vision are not given. We are only informed that Saul had his mind thus supernaturally prepared to receive Ananias, as Ananias was similarly prepared to receive Saul. ¶ *Light.* Ananias was thus informed of Saul's blindness at the same time that he was directed what to do. Saul in vision saw the man and learned his name.

13. *I have heard.* Probably from the numbers who fled from Jerusalem. It would seem from the whole narrative that they were not personally acquainted. ¶ *What evil.* Lit., *How many or great evils.* ¶ *Thy saints.* The Christians at Damascus had heard of Saul's bitter persecutions at Jerusalem. Many refugees from the Holy City were there to tell the awful story. This is the first instance in which the Disciples are called *saints*, though so commonly afterwards, (Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:2.) The term "*saints*"—*holy ones*—according to the Old Testament usage, meant rather such as were separated to a

sacred use. In the Acts, the term here first occurs. In the New Testament it is used, especially by Paul in his Epistles, of those who profess to be holy in heart and life—the Church membership—yet without pronouncing them to be holy, and rather presuming that they are not all such. Eph. 1:1; 5:3. ¶ *To bind.* To put in bonds, to *imprison*. The Christians were distinguished as they who worship Christ as God. So Pliny, in his letter to Trajan, A. D. 102, characterizes them as singing praise to Christ as God. OBSERVE.—If Christ was not God, this was idolatry.

14. *And here*—even at this distance, Ananias already knew of Saul's mission. It had probably been made known to the Christians at Damascus by their brethren in Jerusalem, or by those who had fled from thence—or possibly, as some suppose, by the companions of Saul. ¶ *That call on thy name*—in devout worship.

15. *Go thy way*—Depart, as on a journey. To all Ananias' objections, this was the simple answer, the command to go and do what he was bidden. ¶ *A chosen vessel*, &c.—*utensil*, or *instrument*. Literally, *a vessel of choice unto me*—a vessel of my choice. He (Saul) is such an agent or instrument as I have chosen. ¶ *To bear.* This term is dependent on the former—a vessel or instrument for bearing my name, communicating the knowledge of me, and defending my name *before the Gentiles*—the heathen, Rom. 11:13, 15, 16; Gal. 2:8. ¶ *Kings.* See ch. 25:23; 26:1-32; 27:24. ¶ *Child-*

<sup>e</sup> ch. 20: 23,  
and 21: 11.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. 11: 23.

<sup>p</sup> ch. 22: 12, 13.

<sup>q</sup> ch. 8: 17.

<sup>r</sup> ch. 2: 4, and  
4: 31, and 8: 17,  
and 13: 52.

16 For <sup>e</sup>I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17 <sup>p</sup>And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and <sup>q</sup>putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and <sup>r</sup>be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it

*der* of Israel. The Jews were not to be utterly passed by, though they were to fall into the background by their unbelief. See vss. 20-22; ch. 13: 46; 25: 23; 26: 32; 27: 24; 28: 17; 2 Tim. 4: 16, 17. The Gospel was offered first to the Jews, and when they rejected it, as at Antioch in Pisidia, the Apostles turned to the Gentiles.

16. *For*. That he was such a chosen instrument is further insisted—even in the Divine plan to show him how much he must suffer for Christ's name. ¶ *Shew him*—(by experience) or perhaps, *give him a glimpse*. ¶ *How great things*, (or, *what sort of things*,) *it is necessary that he should suffer for the sake of my name*—in testimony to my person and religion; which he was recently persecuting. See ch. 20: 23, 25; 21: 11; 2 Cor. 1: 8-10; 4: 8-12. **OBSERVE**.—It is not how great things Paul should *do* for Christ that he was to be shown, but how great things he was to *suffer* for Christ. This is the highest duty and dignity. And Christ's sufferings for us, make all our sufferings for Him sweet. The suffering with Him, is also a necessary condition of the reigning with Him—so that it becomes the highest privilege.

17. *Then Ananias*. This word from the risen Lord was conclusive, and satisfied the doubts of Ananias, so that he went on his errand. The two words, *went his way*, and *entered into*, are different compounds of the same verb, and would be more exactly rendered *went away and went into*. ¶ *The house*—viz., of Judas, see vs. 11. ¶ *Putting his hands*. This was the imposition of hands frequently spoken of as an official act. He did it here un-

der a special Divine commission. He was not an Apostle, nor any officer of the Church, but a private Christian; and thus the unofficial men are brought forward, as in the founding of the first Gentile Church at Antioch, that the excellency of the power might be of God and not of men. (See ch. 8: 37, and notes.) ¶ *Brother Saul*. An expression of Christian recognition, showing the confidence which Ananias now felt in Saul, whose name he had before spoken only with dread, vs. 13, 14. ¶ *The Lord*, &c. More exactly it reads, *The Lord hath sent me, even Jesus, who was seen by thee in the way which thou camest*. “*The Lord Jesus*,” was the title applied to Christ. They called Jesus “*Lord*,” and recognized him as God, (ch. 1: 24.) And Ananias gives him now another proof of the fact that this crucified Jesus was alive, and active in his personal salvation. He came to Saul with a commission from the same Jesus who revealed Himself to him on the way to Damascus. ¶ *That*. There were two objects in view for which he was sent. 1st. To have his blindness removed. 2d. To be filled with the Holy Ghost. It was important that he should not receive his Apostleship or authorization from the other Apostles, Gal. 1: 12, 15-19, but directly from God. And so we see the Spirit imparted to him with miraculous gifts, and as a seal to his commission, not by the intervention of Apostles, but by the agency of this private Christian. The participle here used with the verbs, expresses the idea that the object contemplated is definitely occurring and continuing, (Kühner's Gram. § 330.)

18. *Immediately*. The instantaneous cure would be enough to show that it

had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.

19 And when he had received meat, he was strengthened. \*Then was Saul certain days with the disciples <sup>ch. 26:20.</sup> which were at Damascus.

20 And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, \*that he is the Son of God. <sup>ch. 8:37.</sup>

21 But all that heard *him* were amazed, and said: "Is <sup>ch. 8:3, vs. 1. Gal. 1:13-23.</sup> not this he that destroyed them which called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?

was miraculous. Whatever can be done for blindness, is only gradual in its effects. But the effect here described proves that the blindness as well as the cure, was supernatural. This was the impression intended to be made upon Saul and upon others. Such *scale-like* covering could not have been immediately formed, nor immediately removed, without a miracle. And no natural means were used. It is not said that it was *scales*, but something *like scales*, that fell from his eyes. It is not that the effect of the restoration was as if some such substance fell off; for the terms "*as it had been*," qualify the scales, and are used to describe the substance that fell off. This was also given him, perhaps, as a sign of the conversion of his people—that the veil should be taken from their eyes in the reading of Moses. (2 Cor. 3:13-16.) It is thought by many that Paul suffered afterwards from some effects of this blindness. See Gal. 6:11, and ch. 13:9; 23:1. Luke, as a physician, is wont to describe minutely such physical facts. ¶ *Was baptized.* From ch. 22:16, we learn that this was at the call of Ananias. As his blindness had been to him a sign of God's judicial rebuke, wherein he was held under treatment, (as the dumbness of Zacharias, Luke 1:20,) so now his restoration betokened God's favor, and was to him a summons to go forward in Christian duty. Hence he made his prompt confession of Christ in baptism, as was the appointed ordinance in the Church, ch. 2:41; 8:12, 36-39. From ch. 22:16, we in-

fer that he was baptized in the house at once.—A great honor done to baptism, that even Paul could not go without it. OBSERVE.—Here is no *baptismal regeneration*, but baptism as the privilege and duty of one already regenerate.

19. *Meat*—Food, generally, is meant by the term. He was now strengthened by natural means. ¶ *Was Saul.* Literally, *Saul became*—implying the change of relation. ¶ *Certain days.* Literally, *some days*, as we still say. This is not the same with "*many days*," (vs. 23,) which covers the period of three years, during which he was in Arabia, yet going in and out of Damascus, as would seem. (See Gal. 1:17, 18.) There was a company or Church of Disciples at Damascus with whom Paul first stayed and showed his transformation, and then preached in the synagogues. See Gal. 1:12.

20. *Straightway.* After his brief sojourn with the disciples for a few days to prove his conversion and to gain their confidence; or it may be as soon as he was baptized and cured of his blindness. ¶ *Preached Christ.* Literally, *heralded (announced—proclaimed,) the Christ*, that (He) *this one is the Son of God*—that this one—Jesus—is a Divine Being, and the Christ, the Messiah of the Old Testament; as he says, Rom. 1:4, "declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead." So in vs. 22, "*proving that this one (Jesus) is the very Christ.*"

21. *Were amazed.* All those hearing him were amazed at his preaching "*this*



ch. 13: 22.

22 But Saul increased the more in strength, \*and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

ch. 23: 12, and 25: 3.

2 Cor. 11: 26.

23 ¶ And after that many days were fulfilled, \*the Jews took counsel to kill him:

\* 2 Cor. 11: 32.

24 \*But their laying await was known of Saul. And they watched the gates day and night to kill him.

So. Josh. 2: 15.

1 Sam. 19: 12.

25 Then the disciples took him by night, and \*let him down by the wall in a basket.

*name*" (Jesus) as "*the Christ*," when he had so recently *destroyed* (laid waste) *all those who called on Him* (in worship,) at Jerusalem, (in the persecutions there,) and had come hither (to Damascus from Jerusalem,) unto this (end) in order that he might lead them bound unto the high priest, from whom he had his commission, (ch. 4: 23,) the Sanhedrim, or supreme court of the Jews at Jerusalem.

22. *Increased the more.* Rather, *was more strengthened*—had more ability, or power, as one of the true Israel—having power with God and with men, and prevailing (Gen. 32: 28,) in prayers and labors. ¶ *Confounded.* "So that they should contradict themselves."—*Bengel.* See chap. 6: 10, where the same is recorded of Stephen, Paul's forerunner. ¶ *Proving—confirming.* The word means "*putting together the chain of an argument*," or points and proofs. ¶ *That this.* *That this one* (Jesus) *is the Christ.* See vs. 20.

23. *Many days.* Literally, *sufficient days.* Under this general phrase we find the interval of *three years* from the time of his conversion, (A. D. 37–40,) which he spent chiefly in Arabia, (Gal. 1: 18,) not in the peninsula, but in the Peræan district. It was not needful to mention that visit here; and Paul mentions it (Gal. 1: 17,) to show that he did not receive his Apostleship from men; but that instead of going up immediately to Jerusalem to get authority from the Apostles, he went to that retired district. There he probably preached and planted Churches. ¶ *Took counsel.* Literally, *plotted together.* The term expresses the idea of concerted action.

24. *Their laying await.* The term here has close connection with the foregoing word, and means *plot*. ¶ *Was known of Saul*—became known, or was made known to him. ¶ *They watched.* The Jews, and, as it appears from 2 Cor. 11: 32, certain soldiers of Aretas, whose aid the Jews procured, were engaged in watching. Damascus came into the possession of Aretas about this time. He was king of that Arabia whose capital was Petra, and was engaged in war with Herod Antipas, on account of his having divorced Aretas' daughter through the influence of Herodias. Aretas was successful, and Damascus, either by conquest or by cession from Caligula, became his possession; and the Jews were accustomed to call on the civil governors of the provinces for aid. ¶ *The gates.* Every one must come in and go out at the gates of walled cities. Hence, they kept watch of these in order to seize and kill him. The governor seems to have stationed guards at the gates and kept the city under special watch, in order to apprehend him.

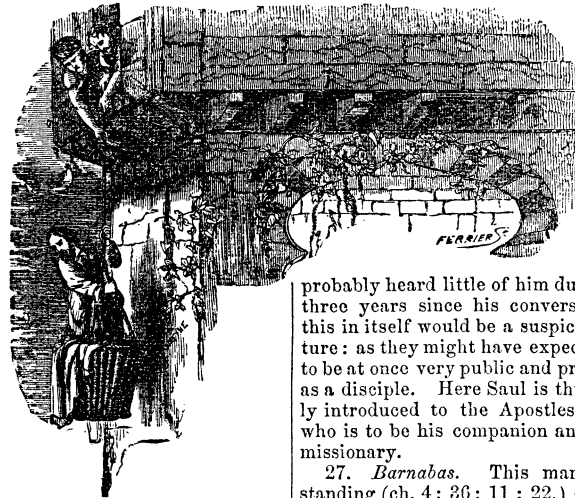
25. *The disciples.* These are here referred to as a well known class—the Christians or followers of Christ—*having taken him—let him down through the wall*, or, (as explained 2 Cor. 11: 23,) *through a window in the wall*. Such a bow window, projecting from the wall, we noticed near the gateway which is pointed out as the same, and which belongs to that roadway toward Jerusalem. It is the window of an apartment built on that part of the wall. See Josh. 2: 15. ¶ *In a basket.* Lit., *having lowered him in a basket*. This refers to a larger kind of basket, common at

26 And <sup>b</sup> when Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed <sup>b ch. 22:17 Gal 1:17, 18.</sup> to join himself to the disciples: but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.

27 <sup>c</sup> But Barnabas took him, and brought *him* to the <sup>c ch. 4:36, and 13:2.</sup> apostles, and declared unto them how he had seen the Lord

the East for carrying loads, though used of food baskets, as Matt. 15:37, in the miracle of feeding the thousands. And there it is used in a large sense, of the abundance left after they had eaten, and our Lord uses it emphatically in

His question, "How many (large) baskets took ye up?" Mark 8:8, 20. Pilgrims are drawn up into the Monastery at Mount Sinai by a basket from a window.



26. *Came to Jerusalem.* This was PAUL'S FIRST VISIT TO JERUSALEM, A. D. 40, of which he speaks, Gal. 1:18. His object was to see Peter and James, "the pillars," and this was after his three years sojourn in Arabia and Damascus. ¶ *Essoyed*—endeavored, attempted—to join himself—to unite himself with them as an associate and fellow-Christian. ¶ *Afraid of him.* If the disciples at Damascus had been afraid of him from all they had heard, much more would these disciples at Jerusalem be in fear from all they had experienced of his persecutions. Even if they had heard of his conversion, they would naturally be suspicious of it, and slow to believe in the reality of the change. They had

probably heard little of him during the three years since his conversion, and this in itself would be a suspicious feature: as they might have expected him to be at once very public and prominent as a disciple. Here Saul is thus kindly introduced to the Apostles by one who is to be his companion and fellow missionary.

27. *Barnabas.* This man's high standing (ch. 4:36; 11:22,) gave his word great weight with the Apostles. He was from Cyprus, which was an island near Tarsus, and some have supposed he must have known Paul. ¶ *Took him.* Took him up—laid hold on him. The same word is used Heb. 2:16; ch. 21:30; 16:19. "They laid hold upon one Simon," Luke 23:26. ¶ *The apostles.* Not to the disciples, who were afraid of him and were so loth to recognize him, but to Peter and James, who were competent to discern his true spirit. Gal. 1:18, 19. ¶ *Declared.* Gave a detailed account of how, in what manner, he (Paul,) had seen the Lord in the road, and that he (Jesus,) had spoken to him—and how (in what circumstances,) he had preached ~~bold~~

<sup>d</sup> vs. 20, 22. in the way, and that he had spoken to him, <sup>a</sup>and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus.

<sup>e</sup> Gal. 1:15. 28 And <sup>e</sup>he was with them coming in and going out at Jerusalem.

29 And he spake boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus, and disputed against the <sup>f</sup>Grecians: <sup>g</sup>but they went about to slay him.

30 *Which* when the brethren knew, they brought him down to Cesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus.

31 <sup>h</sup>Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea

*ly* (with freedom of speech,) at Damascus, in the name of Jesus. One who had been thus miraculously visited by Christ for his conversion and directly commissioned by Him, and who had proved thus faithful as a Disciple, was not to be rejected by them.

28. This interposition of Barnabas, on Saul's behalf, led to his reception and recognition as a Christian, and he *came in and went out freely*, (during fifteen days,) Gal. 1:18.

29. *Spake boldly*. Lit., *He was speaking boldly*, (in Jerusalem, as at Damascus, vs 27.) ¶ *Disputed*. This term denotes a *joint inquiry*—a debate, discussion between two parties. ¶ *Against*—*with the Grecians*, the Hellenistic Jews, those of his own class who spake the Greek tongue, and were foreigners. It would seem to have been at a festival season, when numbers of this class came up to Jerusalem. He probably entered the foreign synagogues, and preached Christ where he had formerly denied Him against Stephen the Hellenistic deacon. ¶ *But they went about*—*were attempting to slay him*—that is, while he was engaged in these discussions, they were engaged in attempts to put him to death.

30. *The brethren*. This epithet, “the brethren,” is here first used historically to denote a Christian society. The Jews commonly used it at this time, as expressing their close relationship to each other as Jews, ch. 22:5; 28:17; and when it was adopted by Christians it signified the cordial “communion of saints,” and distinctive character, 1 Jno. 3:14. ¶ *Brought him down*—from Jerusalem, whence it was down

to Cesarea, on the coast. To Jerusalem, from any quarter, it was *up*, as being the elevated and more important locality. ¶ *Sent him forth*. Lit., *Apostled him away*—*Sent him away forth*. The intimation is, that it was by sea, perhaps by Seleucia to Antioch. ¶ *To Tarsus*. *Toward* in the direction of Tarsus. See Gal. 1:21.

§ 16. STATE OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN JUDEA, &c.—PETER'S CIRCUIT AMONG THEM. A. D. 40. Ch. 9:31-43.

Here occurs a GENERAL REVIEW OF THE CHURCHES IN JUDEA, GALILEE AND SAMARIA, before proceeding to record the new developments for a Gentile and universal Church. In ch. 8:1, it had been already noted that by the persecution at Jerusalem, the dispersed Christians scattered abroad the word in these quarters of Judea, &c. And now it is recorded that the Churches which had thus sprung up, were enjoying *rest*, peace and prosperity. And this was the aspect of the *Jewish Christian Churches*. As a natural consequence of this, it is stated that they *were edified*, built up, “a spiritual house,” as well as an outward body, 1 Cor. 6:19; 8:10.

31. *Then had the churches*. The term used for Church, *ἐκκλησία*, is from the verb signifying to *call out from*, and means an assembly or body called out by summons or invitation from the mass or community at large. The Christian dispensation is distinguished as summoning men from all the world to form a society. The Jewish dispensation had the term *συναγωγή*, meaning

and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.

32 ¶ And it came to pass, as Peter passed <sup>1</sup>throughout <sup>ch. 8:1.</sup> all *quarters*, he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda.

33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, which had kept his bed eight years, and was sick of the palsy.

34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, <sup>k</sup> Jesus Christ <sup>ch. 3:6, 16, and 4:10.</sup>

a gathering together, union, as among the members of an existing society. That dispensation was distinguished as drawing and holding together those who belonged to it. ¶ *Walking*—*proceeding in their course*, in the filial fear of the Lord, passing the time of their sojourning in fear. ¶ *Comfort*—*strengthening*, (and consolation,) connected with the term for Paraclete. These particulars describe the upbuilding. ¶ *Multiplied*. The Churches and their members were greatly increased. This verse is introductory to the narrative of Peter's tour through these Churches of Judea, &c. and it is inserted here to show that these Jewish Christian Churches were not to be overlooked, and indeed if these had been a fair specimen of the Jewish people at large, there would have seemed no reason against the Gentiles coming in through the Jewish pale. But they were only a small minority of the nation. While therefore the Jews had here a specimen of what Christianity could do for them, they were still to have the first offer, and only on their rejection of it was the Gospel to go to the Gentiles.

32. THE CIRCUIT OF PETER among these Churches of Judea, &c. is here given in brief, leading to the account of his vision in regard to the Gentiles being admitted to the kingdom of Christ. It is not unlikely that when the Gospel spread in Samaria and Galilee, the Apostles began to make circuits from Jerusalem and to visit the Churches. Peter's labors extend as far as to the Apostolic Synod, A. D. 50. The following event may belong to the three years of Paul's absence and before his visit to Jerusalem. In that case we

have the parallel histories of what is going on at different points. Having closed Paul's history for the time, Luke begins back now with Peter, as he started out on this Apostolic tour soon after the spread of the Gospel beyond Jerusalem. ¶ *Throughout all*. Our translators have supplied the word "*quarters*"—others supply the word "*saints*;" passing through among all the saints. On this tour *he came down also to the saints that inhabited Lydda*. This town is in the neighborhood of Joppa, and about one day distant from Jerusalem. We passed through the fine rich orange groves and olive yards on the road from Joppa to Lydda, and found there the ruins of a Church, said by some, but without authority, to have been built by Richard Cœur de Lion. The village has about two thousand inhabitants, and is surrounded by the most luxuriant orchards and fields of grain.

33. *Æneas*. As the name is Greek, it has been inferred that he was a Hellenist, or Greek-speaking Jew. It is also inferred that he was already a disciple, as his conversion afterwards is not mentioned, see vs. 34. ¶ *Kept his bed*. Literally, *from (or since) eight years, laid down upon a bed, who was paralyzed*.

34. Peter calls the man by name, to bring home to him most personally the *good news* of his healing by Jesus Christ. Æneas seems to have understood the personage spoken of without explanation, and hence it is inferred that he was a disciple. ¶ *Maketh*. *Is making thee whole*. He does not say, "Jesus will heal thee on certain conditions"—but this is *what He does, and*

maketh thee whole: arise, and make thy bed. And he arose immediately.

<sup>1 Chron. 5:16.</sup> 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and 'Saron saw him,  
<sup>m ch. 11:21.</sup> and <sup>m</sup> turned to the Lord.

<sup>¶ Or, Doe, or, Eos.</sup> 36 ¶ Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named  
<sup>¶ 1 Tim. 2:10.</sup> Tabitha, which by interpretation is called || Dorcas: this  
<sup>Titus 3:8.</sup> woman was full <sup>n</sup> of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

<sup>o ch. 1:13.</sup> 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she was sick,  
and died: whom when they had washed, they laid *her* in <sup>o</sup> an  
upper chamber.

what He has come for, and He is even now applying His cure to thee. Rise up at the joyfui message and act as a *cured man*—"arise and make thy bed." Literally, *spread for thyself* (thy bed.) ¶ *Immediately*. The man acted in prompt obedience to the gracious command. He found strength to obey the command. Christ's commands are not grievous but gracious; and carry with them and in them the promise of His strength, for the performance. The promptness of his action showed his willingness and joy in Christ.

35. *Lydda and Saron*. See vs. 32. Leaving Joppa at seven and a half in the morning and taking the road east to a fountain, through paths skirted by orange groves, we came at eight and a fourth, to *Yazur*, also called *Saron*, lying in sight from the suburbs of Joppa, on a knoll in the plain. At twenty minutes of eleven we came to Ramleh, and at twelve to Lydda. *Saron* seems to have been the ancient metropolis of that region, and was called *Lesharon*, or *Lasharon*, which belonged to Saron. Among the Kings conquered by Joshua, is the King of *Lasharon*, Josh. 12:18. "In the Judaic map, (says Du Veil,) it is a royal city upon a hill called the Hill of Saron, in the tribe of Ephraim." Luke seems to call this place *THE Saron*, here, by an emphasis, for there is another city called Saron, beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, upon the river Arnon. See 1 Chron. 5:16. ¶ *And turned*.

*Who also*—as a result of the miracle—*turned to the Lord*. A general conversion of the inhabitants followed this miraculous work. The fame of it also led to another miracle by Peter at Joppa.

36. *Joppa*, by the sea-side, is a most thriving port, now called *Yaffa*, about forty-five miles north-west from Jerusalem. Here we are soon to be introduced to the wonderful vision of Peter, looking out toward the sea, ch. 10, and beholding the abolition of ancient separating lines between Jews and Gentiles. Meanwhile he works a notable miracle, the first of the kind that was performed by the Apostles. Christ raised from the dead an only son, (of the widow,) an only daughter, (of the ruler,) an only brother, (of the sisters at Bethany;) and here Peter raised a pious maiden, whom all admired and loved. According to the custom, she had two names. Both these signify the same thing—a *gazelle*—a common female name in Palestine. *Tabitha* was the Aramaic name, corresponding with *Dorcas*, the Greek name. It is here shown what rich fruits the Spirit of Christ had matured in this maiden, and what power her goodness gave her in the community—how many excellent deeds she did, and how many warm friends she won, who were also friends of Christ. ¶ *Full*. She abounded and persevered in good works, particularly in alms deeds, making garments for the poor, vs. 39. See 1 Tim. 2:10; Titus 2:7.

37. *She was sick*. Literally, *it came to pass that she, having taken sick, died; and having washed her, they placed (her) in an upper room*. Among the Greeks the corpse was always washed by women, though here the participle is used indefinitely. The upper room was that most commonly devoted to sacred purposes, as of devotion, (ch 1:13.)

38 And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent unto him two men, desiring *him* that he would not || delay to come to <sup>¶ Or, be grieved.</sup> them.

39 Then Peter arose and went with them. When he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber : and all the widows stood by him weeping, and shewing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them.

40 But Peter <sup>p</sup> put them all forth, and <sup>a</sup> kneeled down, <sup>p</sup> Matt. 9: 25. <sup>g</sup> ch. 7: 62. and prayed ; and turning *him* to the body <sup>r</sup> said, Tabitha, <sup>¶ Mark 5: 41, 42.</sup> arise. And she opened her eyes : and when she saw Peter, <sup>John 11: 43.</sup> she sat up.

41 And he gave her *his* hand, and lifted her up, and when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive.

38. *But Lydda being nigh to Joppa—the disciples having heard that Peter was in it—Lydda, (from the fame of his recent miracle,) sent two men unto him, exhorting (him) not to delay to come through even unto them.* Lydda was only about six miles distant from Joppa; and there were disciples at Joppa as well as “saints” (professed disciples,) at Lydda. They sent for Peter, as it was a case which interested the Church, among them. ¶ *Not to delay.* On account of the trouble. Tyndale has it, “not to be grieved.” So Cranmer. The Rheims has it, *not be loath.* ¶ *Two men.* A plurality, as more urgent and respectful than one.

39. *Arose.* Literally, *then Peter, having risen up, went with them; whom, being come, they led up to the upper chamber, (where the corpse was laid, vs. 37.)* ¶ *All the widows*—belonging to that place, and for whom she used to make garments. This class of persons were specially cared for by the Church, ch. 6: 1; 1 Tim. 5: 3–10, 16. (Some suppose that the widows here referred to, are a class of deaconesses having charge of the poor and sick, and showing the garments which were there made up for distribution.) ¶ *Coats and garments.* These are called in male attire, the coat and cloak—the upper and under garment—the loose flowing robe and the tunic or vest—which made up the Eastern dress, then and since. ¶ *Which*—how many and

of what sort. ¶ *Made.* Was in the habit of making—used to make.

40. *Put them all forth*—after Christ's example, when Peter was present, and because they were noisy in their grief, Luke 8: 54. So Elisha, 2 Kings 4: 33. Literally, *Peter having put forth all outside, (of the room,) placing the knees, (kneeling, in proof of his earnestness, says Chrysostom,) he prayed.* He acknowledged the Divine efficiency; and even he who summoned the lame man to walk in the name of Christ, here prays, confessing himself to be but the instrument. So Jesus Himself prayed when He would raise Lazarus from the dead. ¶ *Turning.* He first turned himself to God, then to the body. He spake to the corpse as though it could hear, and in full confidence of its return to life. ¶ *Arise.* This command to the dead body was given in faith of the Divine and quickening power which alone could raise the dead. ¶ *Opened.* The minute particulars are given with every mark of reality, just as an eye-witness would naturally describe the scene. ¶ *Saw Peter.* Her eye rested upon Peter, not as would seem in any fright, but only so as to cause her to sit up, in the consciousness of her restored powers.

41. *He gave, &c.* Lit., *And giving her the hand, he raised her up.* Naturally enough he offered her help, which she may not absolutely have needed, and rather to signify to her that she

<sup>a</sup> John 11: 45,  
and 12: 11.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; <sup>a</sup>and many believed in the Lord.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 10: 6.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one <sup>t</sup>Simon a tanner.

should rise up in full possession of her physical powers. She had doubtless a feeling of entire calmness and security, probably recognizing Peter as her instrumental restorer, and hence she takes his hand and rises at his motion. ¶ *Called.* He at once summoned those to whom she was so well known, to be the witnesses of the miraculous restoration. To those who had so lately lamented her death, he presented her living. 1 Kings 17: 23.

42. This miracle, like that at Lydda, was so remarkable as to become notorious throughout the city. The result was also in this case that "*many believed in (upon) the Lord,*" as in the other case, all the inhabitants "*turned to the Lord,*" (Jesus Christ,) vs. 35; John 12: 11. It was not in the power of the miraculous evidence to convert them, but God blessed these demonstrations to the renewing of their souls. OBSERVE. — These miraculous works of the Apostle of the circumcision are shown, along with the happy state of the Jewish Christian Churches, in order to lead the way to the great change now about to be initiated by Peter's vision, and also to show that all honor is to be put upon the circumcision and upon the ancient Apostolate, even though now the uncircumcision are to be admitted to the same privilege, and the new Apostolate is to go forth upon its work. See vs. 15. The true Israel is the remnant according to the election of grace. It had been expected that the Gentiles would be admitted into the Church, but only through Judaism—coming into the covenant by circumcision. But it begins to appear that it was to be a Gospel of the uncircumcision also. Stephen took broad views in this direction, and probably before Peter's vision the men of Cyprus and Cyrene were gathering the first Gentile Church at Antioch, ch. 11: 20.

43. *Tarried.* The narrative now

leads us to the wonderful event which took place while Peter was providentially, or by the Spirit, detained at Joppa. ¶ *It came to pass*—according to God's direction, and as part of the Divine plan, though not as would seem any part of Peter's plan. God had a purpose for Peter to serve by tarrying in Joppa. ¶ *Many days.* Literally, *sufficient days*—just as many as were needed for the consummation. ¶ *A tanner.* Skins are very much used in the East for bottles, as well as for other domestic purposes. The business referred to here was that of preparing skins for various uses. As it led to contact with dead animals, the business was held in dishonor by the Jews. Chrysostom takes this to be a mark of Peter's humility, that he chose to lodge with a despised countryman. The trade was held in disrepute by other nations also.

## CHAPTER X.

### BOOK III.

#### CHURCH AMONG THE GENTILES.

PART I.—*Spread of Christianity among the Devout Gentiles* — "*Witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.*" A. D. 40–44. Chs. 10–12.

§ 17. VISION OF CORNELIUS AT CESAREA, AND VISION OF PETER AT JOPPA—RECEPTION OF GENTILES INTO THE CHURCH INDEPENDENTLY OF JUDAISM.

The Gospel had now been preached by the Apostles to Hebrew, Hellenist, and Proselyte, Samaritan and Ethiopian, successively. It is henceforth to go to the Gentiles resident in Judea. Up to this point the advance of Christianity had been from Jerusalem among the Jews, through



Ch. N. v. 1.

CÆSAREA.

Jacobus' Acts.





## CHAPTER X.

1 THERE was a certain man in Cesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*.

2 <sup>a</sup> A devout man, and one that <sup>b</sup> feared God with all his <sup>a vs. 22.</sup> house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to <sup>ch. 8:2 and 22:</sup> God <sup>12.</sup> <sup>b vs. 35.</sup> away.

all Judea, and also in Samaria, and by the eunuch toward the uttermost parts of the earth. Now occurs the first reception of devout Gentiles to the Church, *without coming through the gateway of Judaism*. The devout eunuch was at any rate an exceptional case, as one of an extraordinary class. The Apostle of the circumcision is brought forward as instituting this new movement, himself having the vision of this change, and introducing Cornelius as the first fruits of the *half-way Jews*, uncircumcised. Peter appears, thus, as stretching his hand over the transition gulf to Paul, and bridging it over for a free passage to all. It is the rejection of the Gospel system by the Jews as a nation, (saving only a remnant according to the election of grace,) that leads to the admission of the Gentiles at Cesarea without the intervention of Judaism. The connection between Cornelius and Judaism was at most not formal but only spiritual, and had not led to his enrollment as a member of the Jewish Church by circumcision. He was a Gentile, embracing the leading truths of the Jewish religion, and worshipping the true God. **UNCIRCUMCISED GENTILES ARE NOW TO BE RECEIVED INTO THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH AND BAPTIZED.**

1. *Cesarea*. This city on the coast was at this time the political capital of Palestine, the seat of the Roman Procurators, though the government of Judea was transferred to Herod Agrippa, A. D. 41. ¶ *Cornelius*. This is a distinguished Latin name; and this Roman officer, belonging to the last great empire, God had chosen as the first fruit of the Gentiles, in the new movement for introducing them into the Church. ¶ *A centurion*. This title is commonly understood as design-

ating the commander of a hundred men. He was the subordinate officer over the sixth part of a cohort. ¶ *The band*. This was an independent cohort and not part of a legion, levied in Italy and not in Syria, (and probably designed as a body-guard for the procurator,) somewhat as English officers and regiments now in India.

2. *A devout man*, &c. These terms denote Gentiles, who, though not proselytes, had abandoned heathenism, and, by living among Jews, had become worshipers of the true God. In this Gentile mind there was thus a preparedness for the reception of Christianity, brought about by the Spirit of truth, and pointing to Christ. ¶ *With all his house*. He was not only pious for himself and privately, but he gave proof of his sincerity, by so guiding and controlling his household. "I know Abraham," &c. Personal religion will lead to family religion, and prove itself by its fruits in the household. ¶ *Much alms*. Lit., *Doing many charities to the people*, (the Jewish people.) This is also remarked of the other Roman centurion, Luke 7: 5, and it is always a fruit of true piety if not a proof of it, James 1: 27. Yet this conduct was strongly contrasted with that of these heathen officers in general, who plundered the people of the provinces wherever they could. ¶ *Prayed—praying*. It would seem most probable that this relates to his habitual devotions at the regular hours of prayer. Not unlikely he was praying for guidance in the way of life, and for light on the subject of this new faith spreading every where in Judea and through the empire. See vs. 4, 5. And the very difficulty then in his mind may have been this, as to the necessity of Judaism and circumcision in

c vs. 30.  
ch. 11: 18.

3 • He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius.

4 And when he looked on him he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.

5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:

d ch. 9: 43.

e ch. 11: 14.

6 He lodgeth with one <sup>a</sup> Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: • he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do.

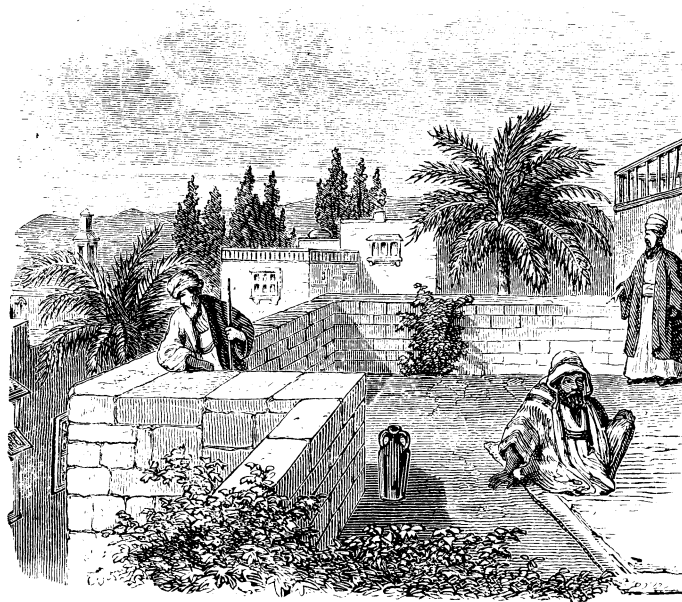
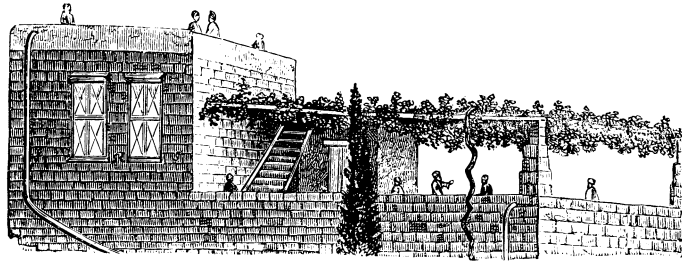
order to union with Christ and His Church. As he "always prayed" and did not faint, he received gracious answers, in fulfillment of the promise, "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord," (Hos. 6: 3.) Even to the darkened Gentile, who has such preparedness of mind and really seeks after Christ, God will raise up teachers and guides, as He sent Philip all the way from Samaria by the road to Gaza, to instruct the inquiring eunuch, and as here He sent Peter to Cornelius. As Philip lived and preached at Cæsarea, (ch. 8: 40,) Cornelius had heard the Gospel, (vs. 37.)

3. *Vision.* Rather, in an *apparition*—not in a dream, but with his bodily eyes. ¶ *Evidently—openly, manifestly*, in human form, vs. 30. ¶ *Ninth hour*—three o'clock in the afternoon, one of the Jewish hours of prayer, ch. 3: 1; 5: 7. ¶ *An angel of God.* The importance of the occasion was so great, opening the Church to a Gentile and thus to the Gentile world, and receiving such an alien and stranger into the household of God, that the mission of an angel was warranted. The person of this angelic being was seen *coming in to him*, standing before him, and was heard calling him *by name*.

4. *Looked*—*Looking steadfastly upon him and becoming very fearful*, (full of awe at the sight of such a celestial visitant,) *he said, What is it Lord?* As we say, "*What is it?*" that has brought you hither? ¶ *Thy prayers and thine alms.* These are the services spoken of (vs. 2,) as those which were the habit of Cornelius. ¶ *Are come up* as

incense, "vials full of odors," Rev. 8: 3, 4. ¶ *For a memorial.* This term is used in the Greek version of the Old Testament for sacrifice, Lev. 2: 2, 16. His prayers and alms were for a reminder in God's "book of remembrance," Mal. 3: 16; Neh. 13: 14, 22, 31, and noted down as calling for the Divine action. This only shows that already this man must have had some faith leading him to pray, and such a faith as brought forth its fruits in his life, and made him already yearn for the benefits of the Gospel. There is no idea here of any thing meritorious in his prayers and alms. But that he went forward in duty so far as he had the light, and in such case he had the promise of more light, and grace for grace, John 1: 16.

5-6. *And now*, since this is so, and the time has come for your prayers to be answered, *send men to (unto) Joppa.* The directions are definitely given. ¶ *Call for.* Lit., *Send for*, the same word as in vs. 22. ¶ *Lodgeth*, as a guest, see ch. 9: 43. ¶ *Whose house.* The site of Simon's house was pointed out to us by the sea-side in Joppa. There we found skins and oil still dealt in, and we saw abundant reasons for such a trade being located near the sea, and in the suburbs of the city, as it was required by law. ¶ *Oughtest.* Lit., *What is necessary*, (namely, according to God's plan.) This made it his duty. OBSERVE.—(1) How could Cornelius imagine what duty or burden was now to be laid upon him, and what would be shown him that he ought to do? Yet he went forward,



-Jacobus' Acts.

HOUSE TOPS.

D. 202.



7 And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually :

8 And when he had declared all *these* things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.

9 ¶ On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, 'Peter went up upon the house-<sup>f ch. 11:5, &c.</sup> top to pray, about the sixth hour :

10 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten : but while they made ready, he fell into a trance.

11 And 'saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel <sup>g ch. 7:56.  
Rev. 19:11.</sup>

ready and anxious to learn his duty. (2) God might have revealed to Cornelius His will by direct disclosures. But He would employ human instrumentality, and bade him send for Peter.

7. Cornelius promptly obeys the Divine direction. He was not thrown into perplexity, but was met in the way of his prayers, and doubtless saw this to be the answer from above. ¶ *Household servants.* Lit., *Domestics.* ¶ *Devout soldier.* One of the private soldiers who attended on this officer, Matt. 3:9; Matt. 8:9. *Da Costa*, in his work entitled, "The Four Witnesses," holds that this soldier was most probably Mark the Evangelist, and that so he was the first convert of Peter, or one of the very first, and hence called *his son*.—A whole household is thus placed in contact with Christianity, when they are in a state of readiness to receive the truth, all in sympathy with Cornelius. Several witnesses were provided to testify to the miracle. Cornelius does not sternly command, but kindly opens the case.

8. *Declared.* Lit., *Given an exegesis*, or historical statement, of these things, which had occurred, vs. 4-6. ¶ *Joppa.* From this same place Jonah was sent to preach to the Gentile Ninevites, and Peter now to the Gentiles at Cesarea, ch. 9:36. Starting at four or five, P. M., they would travel in the cool of the evening and next morning, arriving about noon. This we did. The distance was thirty Roman miles.

9. These messengers being on their way to Joppa, God was at the same time ordering all the circumstances

there, so as to be ready for their call. Peter went up upon the *house*, the flat roof used for sleeping, airing, meditation and devotion, so as the better to pray toward Jerusalem, (1 Sam. 9:26; Jer. 19:13.) The term is *δῶμα*, from which we have *dome*, a circular, arched roof. ¶ *To pray.* It was the second hour for prayer, at noon-time, twelve o'clock, the hour for the mid-day meal.

10. *Very hungry.* As it was meal-time, and as he was to be thus prepared for his vision of food. ¶ *Would have.* Rather, *desired to taste (eat) food.* ¶ *While.* (While) *they now* (the people of the house were) *preparing.* ¶ *Fell into.* Literally, *an ecstasy fell upon him.* "A ravishing of spirit fell on him."—*Wiclif.* The same is used by the Seventy of the "deep sleep" which fell upon Abraham, Gen. 15:12. In such a supernatural absorption of mind some of the most important revelations appear to have been made. Acts 22:17; 2 Cor. 12:2. This was not like the vision of Cornelius, where the objects were seen by the eye, but more like a dream.

11. *Heaven opened.* See ch. 7:56, where Stephen saw "*heaven opened*," the token of a new and special revelation to him. Nathaniel is promised the same, in order to a vision of the Son of man, as the ladder of Jacob's vision. John 1:51. ¶ *Vessel.* This is a very general term meaning *utensil*, or fabric, or instrument, to be explained by the context, as a *sheet*, canvas. ¶ *Kn* Literally, *bound, fastened*—by the four corners, or, literally, *by four beginnings*—four ropes, the beginnings of which

descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth :

12 Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat.

14 But Peter said, Not so, Lord : <sup>a</sup> for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15 And the voice spake unto him again the second time, <sup>1</sup> What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

only were seen, and suspended from above by an unseen hand. ¶ *Let down.* This was the appearance in vision, that such a fabric was let down to the earth. OBSERVE.—God adapts His teachings to our case. He lets down His Divine instructions to our necessities. See Luke 13 : 28–30.

12. This singular receptacle contained *all manner*, &c. Rather, *all the four-footed beasts*, &c., “the whole animal world, without any other distinction than that of their order in the creation.” Gen. 1 : 26. Hence, both the clean and unclean animals were there, as they were distinguished by the Mosaic law. (Lev. 11 : 2.) The text reads, “*All the quadrupeds*,” not “*all manner of*.” Yet this may be the idea—“*all*,” as regards the *varieties*—the article being used generically, to signify that some of all the kinds were there.

13. This is a command, involving a privilege. So is it with all God’s commandments. “*Be saved, be healed.*” Peter being hungry, has this vision. “So God adapts His teaching to our circumstances, and Divine instructions are grafted upon human infirmities.” ¶ *Kill.* This is the term commonly applied to sacrificial slaying, and here it is the same as to say, “Go to work, Peter, and of all these animals slay indiscriminately, with no regard to the Mosaic distinctions of clean and unclean.” They were all set before him, without restriction or limitation, to use as he pleased, of all kinds.

14. *Not so.* Literally, *by no means*, Lord. Peter revolted at this idea as

altogether contrary to all his religious principles and practice. The Jewish law, which he had always strictly observed, set a special difference between clean and unclean animals, in order to train the people to the important distinctions between holy and sinful—holiness and sin—and also to separate them in all their daily living from all other people. ¶ *Common, not consecrated—unholy*—as explained by “*unclean*.” Peter could point to the written law. But a miracle or revelation could show it to be abrogated.

15. This natural reply of Peter, considering all his religious prepossessions and customs as they were authorized fully by the word of God, is answered. ¶ *Cleansed.* God had, in this symbolical representation, *cleansed* the unclean beasts, &c.—that is, had declared them cleansed—had removed their ceremonial defilement, by His authority. And this Divine revelation was to show Peter this fact. ¶ *That call not.* Literally, *the things which, &c., do not thou vulgarize—(profane. Make not—count not, common.)* This last is expressed in one word. And Jews and Gentiles were no longer to be kept asunder, but to be regarded as one in Christ—“where there is neither Jew nor Greek,” Eph. 1 : 10; Col. 1 : 20; 1 Tim. 4 : 4, 5. “A restoration of all things” has now been produced, (ch. 3 : 21,) but only in the hint and earnest of it. The wall of partition was broken down, and the whole Gentile world was to be admitted to the fellowship and privileges of the Gospel, Eph. 2 : 14; Gal. 3 : 28.

16 This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

17 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate,

18 And called, and asked whether Simon, which was surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19 ¶ While Peter thought on the vision, <sup>the Spirit</sup> <sup>ch. 11: 12.</sup> said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.

20 <sup>1</sup> Arise therefore, and get thee down, and go with <sup>ch. 15: 7.</sup> them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

16. *This (thing.)* Meaning either *the voice*, which in the previous verses is said to have spoken "again the second time"—or the vision, voice and all. It would seem that the latter is meant, because the pronoun cannot agree with the term for *voice*, but means "*this thing.*" Yet as the verb is the same as is used with "*voice*" in vs. 13, it may denote that this thing occurred, that is, the voice repeated the third time in connection with the one vision; and the neuter pronoun is used to give the declaration a wider range. This is the more clear from the last clause, which tells us that the vessel was only at the close taken up into heaven, and not *three times* taken up and let down.

17. It was at the moment of Peter's doubt and inquiry, that light was furnished, and all according to the Divine plan, that employed different agents, independent as they were, to bring about His purpose. ¶ *Should mean.* Literally, *might be.* ¶ *The men sent from Cornelius.* The men who had been sent by Cornelius and who had come from him, *having inquired out*—having inquired thoroughly until they found out—as they were instructed to inquire, (5, 6,) and the tanner was an obscure man. ¶ *Stood.* Were present at the gate—the door opening upon the court from the street. This is the style of the more ordinary Oriental houses. Others, and superior ones, have a porch or vestibule between the gate and the court. The Eastern custom is for strangers to stand at the outer gate and call out, "Who lives

here?" or to give warning of their coming.

18. *And called.* Literally, *and having cried (or called) out, they inquired if* (whether or not,) *Simon, he who is surnamed Peter, lodges here*—is entertained here as a guest, or visitor. The name of Simon was so common, that it was necessary to be particular—and he was now better known by this name given him by our Lord, than by "Simon, son of Jonas." It is the custom at the East to stand at the outer gate and call out. See Deut. 24: 11.

19. *Thought.* Rather, *earnestly revolving in mind, or pondering in mind concerning the vision.* This state of Peter's mind, is recorded as so exactly corresponding to the arrival of the men, as it was ordered in God's all-wise and wonderful providence. ¶ *The Spirit.* The same Spirit that gave Peter the vision and Cornelius another vision to match, now notified to Peter the arrival of those men whom He directed to be sent to him. OBSERVE.—Here is the momentous, glorious crisis! As when certain Greeks came to the feast, saying to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus. And Jesus replied, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified." John 12: 20-23.

20. *Arise therefore.* Rather, *but arise.* The "but" turns the discourse to the matter in hand, as to what was to be done in the perplexity. ¶ *Get thee down*—from the house-top to where they are. ¶ *Go.* Depart (on a journey) with them. ¶ *Doubting nothing*—making no hesitation, about going with these heathen—for I have sent them,



21 Then Peter went down to the men which were sent unto him from Cornelius; and said, Behold, I am he whom ye seek: what is the cause wherefore ye are come?

vs. 1, 2, &c.

22 And they said, "Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and "of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

23 Then called he them in, and lodged them. And on the morrow Peter went away with them, "and certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him.

vs. 45.  
ch. 11: 12.

24 And the morrow after they entered into Cesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends.

rather than Cornelius. This would lead him to expect some disclosure as to the meaning of the vision. He was already charged to make no objection to consorting with them, and he would soon hear further from them.

21. Peter obeyed the direction exactly—went down from the roof to the gate, or door, opening from the street. The men seem to have made the common inquiry, and had probably stood without until Peter came. See vs. 23. Peter at once frankly presents himself as the person for whom they were inquiring, and without assuming any superior knowledge, asks of them their errand—waiting to be enlightened on the subject by the event. All that he knew beyond the vision, was that there were three men, and that these were the ones sent by God. ¶ *Ye are come.* Literally, *ye are present.*

22. *The centurion.* Rather, *a centurion.* ¶ *A just man*—righteous in the eyes of the law. In vs. 2, he is called *devout*—pious. ¶ *Feareth God*—THE God, (of Israel.) ¶ *Of good report.* Literally, *witnessed of.* See ch. 6: 3; 16: 2; 22: 12. So of the centurion in Luke 7: 46. All the people of the Jews, as well as his own people, bore ample testimony of his excellent character and deeds. ¶ *Warned from God.* Was divinely instructed. This is expressed by one word in the Greek. ¶ *By a holy angel.* This was the person who was seen by Cornelius in the vision, (vs. 3.) ¶ *Send for.* The

same word as in vs. 5, rendered "*call for.*" ¶ *To hear words.* It was said in the vision, "He shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do," (vs. 6.)

23. *Called he them in.* Literally, *Having called them in, he lodged them.* This refers to an invitation to the hospitalities of the house, to lodge, &c., and seems to imply that they stood outside, or at least in the court as yet. ¶ *Lodged them.* Rather, *treated them as guests.* Though the house was not Peter's, he was at liberty to do this; to invite others as guests where he himself was such a guest. The term is the same as in verse 18 is used of Peter. This is his first "consorting with men uncircumcised and eating with them," as is also probably implied. See ch. 11: 3. ¶ *On the morrow*—after they had tarried over night—*Peter went away with them,* according to the Divine direction, (vs. 20,) and certain brethren, (some of the brethren,) six in number. See ch. 11: 12. Some of the Christian brethren went, probably as personal friends, or it may be, from an expectation of some important event. It was plainly, however, to serve a useful purpose in bearing witness and being appealed to in defense. See ch. 11: 1-12. *Wiclif* has it, "that they might be witnesses to Peter." This doubtless was God's plan.

24. *The morrow after*—after leaving Joppa—one night on the road, thirty miles. For the time occupied in the

25 And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped *him*.

26 But Peter took him up, saying, <sup>r</sup> Stand up; I myself <sup>p ch. 14: 14, 15, Rev. 19: 10, and 22: 9.</sup> also am a man.

27 And as he talked with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28 And he said unto them, Ye know how <sup>q</sup> that it <sup>q John 4: 9, and 18: 25, ch. 11: 3, Gal. 2: 12, 14, Eph. 3: 6.</sup> is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but <sup>r</sup> God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.

journey, see vs. 9 and notes. ¶ *Wait-ed—was expecting them.* This shows the confidence of the man in the result of his mission as Divinely promised, and his zeal in having all in readiness for the instructions expected on the arrival of Peter. See vs. 6. ¶ *Called together—having convened.* ¶ *Kinsmen—his relatives.* ¶ *Near friends.* Lit., *necessary friends*—very intimate friends. This shows the piety of Cornelius, which led him thus to influence these friends and bring them within the reach of these means of grace. It would seem that they had at least become favorably disposed toward the true religion as against idolatry. OBSERVE.—How natural and obligatory is it to seek to bring our kindred with us to Christ.

25, 26. *And as Peter.* Literally, *and as it became (or came to pass) that Peter was entering.* ¶ *Fell down.* Literally, *falling at the feet, worshiped.* It is not said *whose* feet, or *whom* he worshiped, but it is clearly implied. This act of prostration seems not a mere courtesy, as among the Orientals, but an act of homage and worship, as to a superhuman being. As he had received Divine notice of such a messenger and message from God, we cannot wonder, that especially to one born and trained a heathen, this prostration should have been his first impulse. Or even if it was not meant for worship, but only as an expression of profound reverence, Peter resists it as at least seeming to be an unwarranted homage, which he, as being only a man, could not accept. ¶ *I myself also.* Peter saw in Cornelius a

possible misapprehension as though he was taking him for a Divine being; and implies that this might be inferred from his act. But as Peter had been plainly set forth in the vision as being a man, we may suppose that Cornelius had no settled intent of paying him Divine worship, but that Peter revolted at such an appearance of evil. He had in the vision been shown that all men are on the same footing in God's sight. Our Lord was often so worshiped and did not resist it. Matt. 8: 2; 9: 18; 14: 33. The Pope permits such adoration of himself, and thus profanely puts himself in the place of God. 2 Thess. 2: 4; see Rev. 19: 10; 22: 9; ch. 14: 14, 15.

27. *Talked with him.* Rather, *associating familiarly with him*, to show how he put himself on a level with him, both as a man with fellow man, and as a Jew with a Gentile, vs. 28. ¶ *Entered in—to the room from the court.* ¶ *Many.* The number was remarkable enough to be noted here.

28. *Ye.* Peter here at once comes to the point explaining his presence. He declares that the law or custom which they were so well aware of and so much interested in, prohibiting the association of Jews with Gentiles, had been expressly set aside by God. The Jews professed at this time to find such a prohibition in the laws of Moses; and though no express command could be found, this was the interpretation of their Rabbins or Doctors, and it was the common practice of that time. Juvenal and Tacitus tell us that even the Jews who lived at Rome observed this

29 Therefore came I *unto you* without gainsaying, as soon as I was sent for: I ask therefore for what intent ye have sent for me?

30 And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, "a man stood before me 'in bright clothing.

31 And said, "thy prayer is heard, \*and thine alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

rule. ¶ *How that it is—that it is.* The spirit of the Mosaic economy was doubtless to keep the Jews separate from the heathen, and to prevent their intermingling with the Gentiles, until the coming of Christ should bring in the time for the universal spread of the true religion. ¶ *Keep company.* Literally, *to cleave to.* The term is used in the sense of adhering to a party, and implies very habitual association, such as lodging and eating together, as being on a level. ¶ *Come unto.* That is, on terms of social equality—such as eating and dwelling with them would show. In ch. 11: 3, it is defined as *eating with them.* The Jews did not refuse all intercourse with the Gentiles. John 4: 8, 9. ¶ *But.* Rather, *and.* He means to say, "ye know" the rigorous custom; *and yet,* for all that, *God hath showed me* (by the vision,) *no one common or unclean to call (who is) a man.* Though Peter in his discourse at Pentecost declares that the Gospel is to be universally spread abroad, (ch. 2: 39,) yet it was necessary to show him by vision this simple truth, so unwelcome to the Jewish prejudice and so contrary to their practice, that men of all nations were to be acknowledged as on the same footing in the sight of God. The first idea was that the Gentiles were to come into the Church only by becoming converts to Judaism.

29. *Therefore.* *Therefore also I came.* Not only had God showed him this truth, but for this reason he had come. This would account for his presence there among them. ¶ *Without gainsaying.* Literally, *without saying anything to the contrary*—without disputing or debating. ¶ *As soon as.* Literally, *Having been sent for.* This is introduced not to show the promptness of his compliance, but the fact of

their call—and this was to introduce the question which follows. ¶ *I ask therefore.* Literally, *I ask then.* ¶ *For what intent—on what account.* Peter had heard from the messengers that Cornelius was directed by an angel to send for him and to hear words of him, (vs. 22.) But this was indefinite, and would naturally excite in Peter a desire to hear from Cornelius himself the full particulars in so important a case.

30. *Four days ago.* Literally, *from the fourth day.* Cornelius sent the messengers to Joppa on the day of the vision, where they arrived the day following, (vs. 29.) The next day they started for Cesarea, and reached it on the fourth. He means here to say, that *on the fourth day previous, he had fasted until this hour* of that day—that is, until the hour in which he was speaking—the sixth hour; the hour of the mid-day meal, or twelve o'clock at noon. This is mentioned by the centurion, to show that he was observing the Jewish ordinances of fasting and prayer, as a convert from heathenism to the true religion. ¶ *The ninth hour.* Three o'clock, P. M. The fast continued until then. ¶ *In my house.* Not ostentatiously, but domestically. OBSERVE.—Household worship—family prayer and the family altar—will be established by every true worshiper of God, and God will honor domestic piety to the salvation of the household, vs. 44. ¶ *A man.* The same that Luke in the narrative calls an angel, vs. 3. He was a supernatural messenger in human form, and in bright shining raiment, showing the Divine glory by which he was commissioned.

31. *And said.* Cornelius here gives the main ideas of the Divine message in his own language. This is accepted as sufficient for all purposes in making

32 Send therefore to Joppa, and call hither Simon, whose surname is Peter; he is lodged in the house of *one* Simon a tanner, by the sea-side: who, when he cometh, shall speak unto thee.

33 Immediately therefore I sent to thee; and thou hast well done that thou art come. Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.

34 ¶ Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, *Of a* truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

35 But *in* every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

9 Deut. 10: 17.  
2 Chron. 19: 7.  
Job 34: 19.  
Rom. 2: 11.  
Gal. 2: 6.  
Eph. 6: 9.  
Col. 3: 25.  
1 Pet. 1: 17.  
2 ch. 15: 9.  
Rom. 2: 13-27,  
and 3: 22-29, and  
10: 12, 13.  
1 Cor. 12: 13.  
Gal. 3: 28.  
Eph. 2: 13, 18,  
and 3: 6.

an accurate report. ¶ *Thy prayer.* Not referring to any particular prayer, necessarily—but thy praying in general. Or it may refer to a very special prayer made by Cornelius on the fast day for Divine illumination. The latter is more probable. God does not regard prayers that are made without an object, but answers particular requests: and this He does not in the general but in particular. Yet his prayer at this time was doubtless the representative of his other prayers—the burden of which was, that he might be enlightened and guided in the truth—for the answer was to this effect. ¶ *Is heard.* Rather, *was heard*, at the time. ¶ *Had in remembrance.* Rather, *were remembered*—as if noted in God's book of remembrance at the time. In vs. 4, it is, “thy prayers and thine alms have (ascended) come up for a memorial before God.”

32. *Call hither.* In vs. 5, “send for.” ¶ *He is lodged.* In vs. 5, the same word is rendered “he lodgeth.” ¶ *When he cometh.* Literally, *who having come*—when he is come. ¶ *Shall speak unto thee.* “Shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do,” vs. 6—“hear words of thee,” vs. 22.

33. *Immediately therefore*—for this reason—see vs. 7. “*Good ground*,” says Bengel, “*from which there is so quick a yield.*” ¶ *And thou*—(emphatic)—on thy part. ¶ *Hast done well.* Peter's coming entirely falls in with the message of Cornelius to him, and gives great satisfaction. This is said, to put Peter's mind at rest—that he had come in obedience to the Divine call

through Cornelius. ¶ *Before God*—with a sense of the Divine presence, and as expecting to receive a message from God. OBSERVE.—The message from the sacred desk ought to be attended upon as in the presence of God. ¶ *To hear all things.* This is the right spirit of *docility*—to “hear what God the Lord will speak,” (Psalm 85: 8.) ¶ *Commanded thee.* Expressly appointed—ordered. This is a military term, and denotes special orders given. Cornelius does not doubt that God, who had promised that Peter would speak to him and tell him what he ought to do, had given a message to Peter for him. He recognizes no authority in Peter personally, but only as the messenger of God to him. It is God, and not Peter, that he and his household worship.

34. *Opened his mouth.* This denotes a solemn and special address. See 8:

35. ¶ *Of a truth, &c. I apprehend clearly*, (not any longer dimly and uncertainly,) that God is no respecter of persons—literally, “*no lifter up of the face*”—from the Hebrew phrase which denotes a partiality in administering justice. He means that God does not accept a Jew because he is a Jew—nor reject a Gentile because he is such. He is not swayed by any such mere outward and national considerations, as is the case with men, Jas. 2: 1-9. Peter, in his first Epistle, again refers to this important truth that was now so clearly conveyed to him, 1 Peter 1: 17. See 2 Chron. 19: 7; Lev. 19: 15.

35. *But* (on the contrary) *in every nation*—without respect to mere na-

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 57: 16.  
<sup>b</sup> Eph. 2: 14, 16,  
 17.  
<sup>c</sup> Col. 1: 20.  
<sup>d</sup> Matt. 28: 18.  
<sup>e</sup> Rom. 10: 12.  
<sup>f</sup> Cor. 15: 27.  
<sup>g</sup> h. 1: 24, 22.  
<sup>i</sup> Pet. 5: 22.  
<sup>j</sup> Rev. 17: 14, a, and  
 19: 16.  
<sup>k</sup> Luke 4: 14.

36 The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, <sup>a</sup>preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (<sup>c</sup>he is Lord of all;)

37 That word, *I say*, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and <sup>e</sup>began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached;

tional distinctions, as might have been inferred from the Jewish economy—for in Christ Jesus there is neither Greek nor Jew (Col. 3: 11,) Rom. 2: 28, 29. ¶ *Feareth him*. This does not put all religions on an equality, but all nations. This fear of God is that filial fear which leads to a cheerful obedience. Peter in his Epistle speaks of the same, (1 Pet. 1: 17, 18,) “If ye call on the Father who, *without respect of persons*, judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in *fear*. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” This shows that Peter did not teach that fearing God and working righteousness were in themselves to make us accepted with God—but he declares the fact, that whoever is of such character and conduct is one who is accepted, being redeemed with the precious blood of Christ—and this no matter of what nation he may be—Jew or Greek. See vs. 43. Peace can come only by Jesus Christ, vs. 36. Peter had received information on this point, viz. that national distinctions could put no barrier in the way of a man’s salvation, and hence that a Gentile, because he is a Gentile, is not excluded. He, on the other hand, means to teach that something more than a mere external, ceremonial obedience is necessary, and that a Jew, because he is “a Jew *outwardly*,” is not accepted. He does not teach that every heathen’s natural light is sufficient, nor that a moralist’s good works can save him, for he immediately proceeds to preach *Christ*, and “*peace by Jesus Christ*,” as the vital word or doctrine.

36. *The word—the doctrine, or teaching*. Peter appeals to them now in regard to the notable facts of the Gos-

pel history and of the Gospel message. Some connect this with vs. 34, as the thing perceived by Peter. The construction might admit of this, but the sense is not so appropriate. This Divine communication was first made to the children of Israel in the Gospel of the Old Testament; but especially in the preaching of the New Testament by Peter himself at Pentecost, (ch. 2: 22, 38; 3: 26.) ¶ *Preaching*. Literally, *Evangelizing*—publishing as good news. This was the fact of which they had heard, though they had not as yet apprehended it by faith. ¶ *Peace*. Peace with God. Zech. 6: 13. “The counsel of peace.” “He is our Peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us.” “Preached peace to you that were afar off and to those that were nigh.” Eph. 2: 14, 17; Col. 1: 20; Rom. 5: 1. ¶ *He is Lord of all*. This clause is thrown in here to express the great pertinent truth that this Jesus Christ, who is preached, sustains the same original relation to all men, Jew and Gentile. This is indeed the very vital point. Rom. 1: 16; 3: 29, 30; 10: 12.

37. *That word*. Literally, *the matter which became*—the thing which came to pass, or the history which went abroad. They had learned something of Christ’s life and works already in Cesarea. Philip resided there, ch. 8: 40, and may likely have preached there, as he preached before at Samaria, &c., and was the “Evangelist.” Some have supposed that this was the centurion who was present at Christ’s crucifixion, since troops from Cesarea were often sent to Jerusalem to keep the peace during the great festivals. Matt. 27: 44. ¶ *Began from Galilee*. Christ did some preliminary works in Judea before John was put into prison. But

38 How <sup>a</sup> God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; <sup>b</sup> for God was with him.

39 And <sup>c</sup> we are witnesses of all things which he did, both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; <sup>d</sup> whom they slew and hanged on a tree:

His regular formal entrance upon His ministry began in Galilee, whither He departed and began His public labors as soon as John was imprisoned. Matt. 4: 12, 17. ¶ *After the baptism.* John's ministry is called the baptism which he preached, for it is so described by the Evangelists, that he preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. (Mark 1: 4.) OBSERVE.—The belief of Christians is based on great matters of fact, in the personal history of Jesus Christ.

38. *How.* Literally, *Jesus, the one who was from Nazareth, how God anointed Him.* This Jesus was the Person who was the subject of the word preached. It was not an idea, nor a mere theory. But it was *fact* in regard to a *Person* who was well known. And the religion of Christ rests upon a solid historical basis, and the facts are as fully attested as any history whatever, the supernatural facts along with the rest, so that it is matter of history that this religion is from God. ¶ *Anointed.* This anointing of Christ by the visible descent of the Holy Spirit upon Him at His baptism, was the opening fact in the history of His public ministry, (Matt. 4: 12–17,) though He was witnessed to as the Messiah in His incarnation. OBSERVE.—How entirely the Apostle confines himself in his preaching here to the Person, and offices, and work of Christ, as he did also in his preaching at the Pentecost, (ch. 2: 14, &c.) ¶ *With power.* The Holy Spirit was given without measure unto Him, and “all power in heaven and on earth,” (Matt. 28: 10.) His miracles were the standing proof of His Divine commission. ¶ *Who went about.* This is the inspired description of our Lord's life and labors of love. *Who went about,* or went every where, (as

the word is rendered, ch. 8: 4,) *doing good.* The use which Christ made of this Divine power proved that He was a Divine Being. “He did no sin,” (1 Pet. 2: 22.) He did good and nothing else—good in all forms of beneficence. He wrought no miracle for any thing else but good. Where He bade the devils depart into the swine, (Matt. 8: 30,) there was a loss to the owners, but the keeping of swine was prohibited among the Jews, and much good was there in sending the devils out of men, even if they went from them into the swine! ¶ *Healing all, &c.* That is, all who sought His healing, or who were brought to His notice. ¶ *Oppressed.* The term means *tyrannized over*, (James 2: 6,) *down-trodden.* This includes cases of demoniacal possessions and diseases. The former is specially alluded to, as being the highest form of Satanic agency in the natural world. ¶ *For.* His miracles proved that God was with Him, as Nicodemus declared, John 3: 2. Miracles were wrought to prove this, and they were acknowledged to be conclusive evidence. Besides, He was “*God*,” as well as “*with God*,” John 1: 1.

39. *We.* The Apostles were raised up and commissioned for this, to be witnesses of Christ's works and resurrection, (ch. 1: 22,) and their testimony was confirmed by the Holy Ghost, Heb. 2: 2, 3. ¶ *Whom they slew.* Lit., *Whom also*—another and important item in the history. This was done at Jerusalem, and other things in the country of the Jews, comprising all the Holy Land. ¶ *And hanged.* ¶ *Slew (by) hanging (him) on a tree.* See ch. 2: 23; 3: 14; 4: 10; 5: 30, where Peter addressed the Jews who were actors, but here he addresses Gentiles, (see note, ch. 5: 30,) and

h ch. 2: 4.  
 (John 11: 17, 22.  
 ch. 13: 3.)  
 k Luke 24: 30-43.  
 John 21: 13.  
 l Matt. 18: 19, 20.  
 ch. 1: 8.  
 m John 5: 22, 27.  
 ch. 17: 31.  
 n Rom. 14: 9, 10.  
 2 Cor. 5: 10.  
 2 Tim. 4: 1.  
 1 Pet. 4: 5.  
 o Isa. 53: 11.  
 Jer. 31: 34.  
 Dan. 9: 24.  
 Mic. 7: 18.  
 Zech. 13: 1.  
 Mal. 4: 2.  
 ch. 26: 22.  
 p ch. 15: 9, and  
 26: 18.  
 Rom. 10: 11.  
 Gal. 3: 22.

40 Him <sup>a</sup> God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly;

41 <sup>1</sup> Not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, *even* to us, <sup>k</sup> who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead.

42 And <sup>1</sup> he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify <sup>m</sup> that it is he which was ordained of God *to be* the Judge <sup>n</sup> of quick and dead.

43 <sup>o</sup> To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name <sup>p</sup> whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

though Cornelius was a Roman soldier and that class crucified Him, yet as a class they were not charged with it, but the Jews who procured it.

40. *Him.* Lit., *This one*, whom men had so treated—God raised up. Peter having set forth the great fact of the crucifixion of Christ, passes now to His resurrection. ¶ *The third day.* Important, because according to prophecy; and hence a fact in itself conclusive of the Divine work. ¶ *Shewed him, &c.* Literally, *Gave Him to become manifest*, ch. 2: 27. Christ visibly appeared to many after his resurrection, (1 Cor. 15: 5-8.)

41. *Not to all.* He showed Himself after his resurrection, not to the outside world of unbelievers, but only to His chosen Disciples, Matt. 21: 44; see Luke 24: 43; John 21: 12-17. ¶ *Chosen before.* The term refers to election <sup>l</sup> raising the hand. Their choice was beforehand—before the foundation of the world, (John 17: 6,) but here noted as before the event which He so clearly saw and provided for, as also He predicted it to them, (John 16: 7.) ¶ *Who ate and drank with Him,* and thus were enabled to witness of His real body, (John 21: 12,) and of its being the same person with whom they had been familiar, Luke 22: 18; 24: 41, 43.

42. *Commanded.* That is, as He ascended, (Matt. 27.) His ascension is thus referred to here. This was the Apostolic commission, “Go ye therefore and teach all nations,” &c. ¶ *Preach.* The term refers to the pub-

lic announcements of heralds. ¶ *Unto the people.* The word commonly denotes the *Jewish* people, and the Apostles had been charged to begin at Jerusalem, though they were to “teach all nations.” ¶ *Testify.* The term is intensive, and means to *thoroughly testify*. ¶ *That it is He.* Lit., *That Himself is the one.* ¶ *Ordained—designated,* Rom. 1: 4. ¶ *Judge.* That He is the *Judge of all men*, as well as Lord of all, is proof that He is not confined to any nation in His scheme of grace. Paul brings forward the same idea to the same effect, showing the universal obligation to repent, from this fact of Christ's relation to all men as Judge, (ch. 17: 31.) ¶ *Quick—living men—* all who shall be alive at the time of His coming to judgment, (1 Cor. 15: 52;) 1 Thess. 4: 16, 17.

43. *All the prophets.* See Luke 24: 27, 44. “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy,” (Rev. 19: 10;) Isa. 28: 16; Dan. 9: 24; Micah 7: 18; Zech. 13: 1; Malachi 3: 1. The whole Old Testament is full of Christ. Though Peter was addressing Gentiles, yet the proof from fulfilled prophecy is adapted to all minds, and ought to carry conviction. The drift of prophecy in regard to Christ is, that He is the Saviour of Sinners. This is the burden of the Old Testament predictions, and in this light Peter holds Him up—that this Lord and Judge of all men is the Saviour of all who believe in Him. This would apply to those before His advent, and to all men since, *that every one* (Jew or Gentile)

44 ¶ While Peter yet spake these words, ' the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. g ch. 4 : 31, and 8 : 15, 16, 17, and 11 : 13.

45 ' And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, ' because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. r ver. 23. e ch. 11 : 13. Gal. 3 : 14.

46 For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47 Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost 'as well as we ? e ch. 11 : 17, and 15 : 8, 9. Rom. 10 : 12.

*believing in Him, (or upon Him,) receiving and resting upon Him alone for salvation, shall receive remission (forgiveness) of sins.* This is the substance of the prophet's testimony, Isa. 53 : 1 ; 55 : 1, &c.

44. Here occurs the GENTILE PENTECOST, very much like the Jewish Pentecost at Jerusalem. "*While Peter yet spake these words*" of A GOSPEL FOR ALL NATIONS AND FOR "WHOSOEVER WILL," the Holy Ghost honored the message. The baptism of the Holy Ghost was here given before the water baptism, to show that it was not from Peter, or by his office-work, but directly from God. This will show us that the Holy Spirit is not so tied to the ordinance of baptism, as to be dependent on it, and that the regenerating efficacy does not lie in the rite of baptism. Simon Magus was baptized without being renewed, (ch. 8 : 13, 22,) and here men are renewed without baptism or circumcision. It was an important lesson, that the grace of God is not confined to external observances, though these be his ordinary channels of bestowing grace. ¶ *The word—who were hearing the word, or discourse which he preached.*

45. *The circumcision.* The believing Jews of the company, spoken of in vs. 23, *who came with Peter*, ch. 11 : 2 ; Gal. 2 : 12 ; Titus 1 : 10. ¶ *Gentiles also*, as well as Jews previously, vs. 47. They seem to have clung to the idea that the heathen must first become proselytes, at least, and come into the Church through Judaism by circumcision, &c. Yet here they saw an out-

pouring of the Holy Ghost like that upon the Jews and proselytes at Pentecost.

46. *For.* The plain proof of the Spirit's outpouring was in the gift of tongues. This made it manifest by their miraculous speech in unknown dialects, as at Pentecost, that they had received the same gift. The miraculous gift was imparted, not only for itself, but also to make manifest the inward spiritual gift, and to aid in breaking down the wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles, which had been kept up so much by the difference of speech. Thus was the Gentile Pentecost. ¶ *Magnify God.* "Speaking the wonderful works of God," ch. 2 : 11, using these forms of speech in declaring the praises of God.

47. *Can any one.* Literally, *is any one able to forbid.* Has any one power to forbid or *hinder the water*—namely—which is Divinely appointed to symbolize in the baptismal ordinance the influence of the Holy Spirit. This visible sign was required even though the spiritual grace which it signified had been bestowed. *Alford* remarks that "the expression here, '*forbid water*,' shows that the practice was to *bring the water to the candidates*, not the *candidates to the water*. And this is rendered certain when we remember that they were assembled in the house. He does not say, "*Can any man forbid me to bid these go forth to the water, &c.*" but "*Can any man forbid THE water, (with the article,) the water at hand.*" So the eunuch said, "See here is water, what doth hinder me to be bap-



u 1 Cor 1:17.  
w ch. 2 38, and  
6:16.

48 \*And he commanded them to be baptized \*in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days.

#### CHAPTER XI.

1 AND the apostles and brethren that were in Judca heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

tized?" He does not say, see here is deep water, or sufficient. But water was all that was needed. It is certainly clear that nothing is hinted of immersion as being requisite, nor anything said of "going under the water." ¶ *Who have received, &c.* The ground of the claim to baptism here is the actual reception of the Holy Spirit entitling them to the seal of God's covenant. Baptism is a privilege of membership in the visible Church, not an ordinance for introducing persons to the Church. Infants of believers are baptized, because they are included with their parents in God's covenant and reckoned with them as yet, not because they are presumed to have the Holy Spirit. This outpouring of the Spirit upon the Gentiles shut out the question which else must have arisen, whether these must not be circumcised before baptism.

48. *He commanded, &c.* This is not the same term as is so translated in vs. 42, but refers rather to giving direction. He did this according to his own full commission. See vs. 33. One reason may have been to commit these brethren to the matter, so that they would abide by this course of action and not easily be led away by the Jews. Moreover, the Apostles, as Paul, seem rather to have administered baptism through others, (ch. 2:38; 1 Cor. 1:14-17; see John 4:2,) lest any rite should overshadow the preaching of the word, see ch. 6:2, and lest those baptized by our Lord, or by chief Apostles, should claim some pre-eminence on that account. ¶ *In the name.* In ch. 2:38, the preposition used means *upon*, on profession of the name. Here it is "*in*" the name—by the authority of, and in the confession of the name—in recognition and adoption of the

name of the Lord Jesus. Cornelius had already professed the name of God. He had now to confess his faith in Jesus as the Messiah. The terms here do not give the form of baptism, but the substantial profession. ¶ *Then, &c.* They expressed their kind feeling toward these servants of the Lord. Peter was thus made a guest of the Gentiles, (see ch. 11:3,) and openly declared thus that a Jew could eat with Gentiles who feared God.

#### CHAPTER XI.

§ 18. PETER REPORTS TO THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM HIS VISION AND THE RECEPTION OF DEVOUT GENTILES, AND VINDICATES HIS COURSE IN CONSORTING WITH THEM. *Jerusalem.* Ch. 11:1-18.

1. This conduct of Peter, so novel, so unheard of, so contrary to the usages of the Jewish Church—in receiving Gentiles to the Church without circumcision—had been justified to his own mind by a special revelation from God. It was now to be vindicated to his Jewish brethren. ¶ *The Apostles.* John and James were there at this time, (ch. 8:14; 12:2,) besides others without doubt, and "*the brethren*"—the Church members belonging to different Churches in Judca, both Jews and proselytes. See Gal. 1:22. It was not surprising that so remarkable an event should soon be heard of at Jerusalem and throughout that whole region of country. They *heard that the Gentiles also*, (or heathen,) for this was the first spreading of the Gospel beyond the Jewish pale in such a way as to open the door to the whole heathen world—"had received the word of God"—that is, had had the Gospel preached to them, and had embraced

2 And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, <sup>a</sup> they <sup>a ch. 19:45.  
Gal. 2:12.</sup> that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3 Saying, <sup>b</sup> Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, <sup>c</sup> and <sup>b ch. 10:28.  
c Gal. 2:12.</sup> didst eat with them.

4 But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* <sup>d</sup> by order unto them, saying, <sup>d Luke 13.</sup>

5 <sup>e</sup> I was in the city of Joppa praying: and in a trance <sup>e ch. 10:9, &c.</sup> I saw a vision, A certain vessel descend, as it had been a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came even to me.

6 Upon the which when I had fastened mine eyes, I considered, and saw four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

it—the *Gentiles* ALSO, as well as the Jews. They seem to have heard this report in the general, and some details, vs. 13, and the offensive features of the case were made prominent, vs. 3.

2. *Of the circumcision.* When Peter went up, (from Cesarea, whither he had gone from Joppa,) those belonging to the *circumcision*—Jewish converts to Christianity—probably the proselytes, who would feel that an unfair distinction was made in favor of these Gentiles who were admitted to the Church without circumcision—or, the Jewish believers generally, who are referred to as sticklers for circumcision—*contended—had a difference with him.* One of the fathers tells us that Cerinthus, who was afterwards a noted heretic in Asia Minor, and against whose denial of Christ's divinity John is said by some to have written his Gospel history, was active in exciting this contention against Peter. It is plain that Peter was not regarded by the primitive Church as supreme and infallible.

3. The ground of the accusation was that he put himself on a level of social equality with Gentiles, contrary to the most acknowledged usages of the Jews. This was even so strong and rooted a feeling, that Peter himself afterwards, in a moment of temptation, yielded to it, and was sharply reproved by Paul for his inconsistency, (Gal. 2: 11.) But there was behind this a graver complaint—that he had set aside Judaism altogether by

admitting Gentiles to the Church without circumcision. ¶ *Didst eat.* This eating together was counted a serious offense. And hence we see the significance of the scene in the vision, and of the command to eat the clean and unclean without distinction.

4. *Rehearsed.* Literally, *beginning, set forth to them in order.* The *facts* were his best argument. He needed only to show the Divine authority. Our Christian faith is founded on great *facts* divinely authenticated. The repetition of this history by Peter, shows how important was this early conflict between Christianity and Judaism.

5-11. The particulars are recited with some slight, unessential variation of language, just as any one would relate the same history, but not in the very same words, at different times. This variation does not conflict with truth in any other narratives, and fairly judged, they only confirm the truth here. ¶ *Came even unto me.* This is an additional particular not given before. In ch. 10: 11, the vessel is described as “let down to the earth.”

6. The terms here used are such as to show not merely the facts—but Peter's own impressions—and that he was not deceived, but most earnestly gazed and examined the objects set so directly before him. Literally *upon which, having looked earnestly, I considered and saw.* There could have been no mistake.

7 And I heard a voice saying unto me, Arise, Peter; slay and eat.

8 But I said, Not so, Lord: for nothing common or unclean hath at any time entered into my mouth.

9 But the voice answered me again from heaven, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

10 And this was done three times: and all were drawn up again into heaven.

11 And, behold, immediately there were three men already come unto the house where I was, sent from Cesarea unto me.

¶ John 16: 13.  
ch. 10: 19, and  
15: 7.  
¶ ch. 10: 23.

12 And 'the spirit bade me go with them, nothing doubting. Moreover 'these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered into the man's house:

¶ ch. 10: 30.

13 <sup>a</sup> And he shewed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter;

14 Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.

8. Peter here repeats his own first reply, to show that he had at first felt as much repugnance as his accusers, to any such ceremonial defilement. ¶ *Entered into my mouth.* This is Peter's language of defense, stronger than Luke's narrative, as if spoken with emotion.

10. *All were drawn up.* Luke speaks, (ch. 10,) of the *vessel*: Peter here speaks of the *animals*, as most important for answering the charge.

11. *Immediately.* Peter uses this word, and "*behold*," and "*already*," to call attention to the direct and important connection between the vision and the transaction, as showing the Divine meaning of the vision and the authority for his action ¶ *Sent.* The fact was that they were *sent* by Divine direction, and here lies the force of this statement.

12. *The Spirit.* He now declares the Divine command under which he proceeded. ¶ *Nothing doubting.* Literally, *nothing debating*, or *disputing with myself.* He refers to the fact that he had grievous doubts, but that he was commanded to make no question and to go forward. This is aimed at these doubters as an authority quite conclusive against their scruples—and to show that he acted thus not from any less repugnance to the questiona-

ble course, but simply because he was so commanded by God. ¶ *These six brethren.* Peter took the precaution to have "*these brethren*" accompany him to Jerusalem, who went with him from Joppa to Cesarea, and witnessed the transaction there, (ch. 10: 23, 24.) He may have taken them to Cesarea with this view. ¶ *The man's house—* i. e. of Cornelius—who was understood as referred to—the person who was notorious as the actor in this important event—who is not named as being the uncircumcised man all along spoken of.

13. *An angel.* Literally, *the angel.* It would seem that the hearers may have already become familiar with the story, or that Peter had given it to them more fully than is here recorded, or that it was *the same* angel who appeared to Cornelius and Peter, *which stood and said*—giving him the best opportunity to assure himself of the reality before him. This angel was not seen in vision, but really appeared to Cornelius.

14. *Who shall tell thee.* Ch. 10: 6. "Who shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do?"—ch. 10: 22, "to hear words of thee." ¶ *All thy house.* "*By which thou shalt be saved, and ALL THY HOUSE*"—as sharing the promise with thee, according to the HOUSEHOLD COVENANT. These words were to come

15 And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, <sup>1</sup>as on us at the beginning.

<sup>1</sup> ch. 2: 4.

16 Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, <sup>\*</sup>John indeed baptized with water; but <sup>1</sup>ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

<sup>\*</sup> Matt. 3: 11.  
John 1: 26, 33.  
ch. 1: 5, & 19: 4.  
<sup>1</sup> Isa. 44: 3.

17 <sup>m</sup> Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>n</sup> what was I, that I could withstand God?

Joel 2: 28, and 3: 18.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. 15: 8, 9.  
<sup>n</sup> ch. 10: 47.

18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, <sup>o</sup> Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

<sup>o</sup> Rom. 10: 12, 13, and 15: 9-16.

to *Cornelius*, and were to be words for his whole *household's salvation*. Thus God's covenant has always had tender regard to the households of his people. Plainly it is a household *promise*—for it is, that ALL HIS HOUSE SHOULD BE SAVED, as well as *himself*, by these same words: and all the house were baptized with him, ch. 10: 48, as members of the household of faith. This was elsewhere the case, ch. 16: 15, 32-34; 1 Cor. 1: 16.

15. *As I began*. Peter thus calls attention to the great fact that it was not his speaking but the Spirit's outpouring which did the work, and this was his warrant. And the Spirit descended so soon after Peter began to speak, as to show that it was in the Divine purpose, not in the human agency, that the explanation was to be found. (See Peter's discourse, ch. 10: 34-44.) ¶ *As on us—as also*. Peter aimed to show that the Gentiles had received the same spiritual gifts as the Jews at the beginning—at Pentecost; and were thus equally recognized and honored by God as subjects of His grace. See vs. 17, 18.

16. *Then remembered*. This promise of the baptism with the Holy Ghost was brought to Peter's mind in a special application. It was made just before the Ascension, (see ch. 1: 5,) and was connected with the promise of the Apostles being witnesses to His name unto the uttermost ends of the earth. Now it appears that these Gentiles were included in the promise, and were thus numbered with His followers, and no difference was put

between them and the Jews in the blessing.

17. *Forasmuch then, &c.* The argument is clear and conclusive. God had put the same seal of His grace upon both, and they were therefore entitled to the same seals of the covenant. God had plainly gone beforehand in the whole matter and indicated His will; and to refuse the inferior and symbolical ordinance, to withhold the sign after the thing signified had been given, would have been to withstand God. ¶ *The like gift*. Literally, *equal gift*. ¶ *Who believed*. This is to be joined with both “them” and “us.” To them (as also to us) believing—both they and we being believers in the Lord Jesus Christ; which is the essential matter in either case, the proof of the Spirit's saving work, and the great requisite for salvation. ¶ *What was I*. *Who then was I*—(I, then—who was I) able to hinder. He was only a minister by whose instrumentality men were to believe, (1 Cor. 3: 5,) and what could he do but follow the Divine indication. ¶ *That I should*. Literally, *able to hinder* (or *forbid*) God. That is, how had I any authority or power to hinder God. See ch. 10: 44, 47.

18. This testimony and appeal of Peter produced conviction, and led to a hearty and devout acquiescence. ¶ *They were silent*, so as no longer to dispute the matter, and *they glorified God* for this amazing instance of His power and grace. ¶ *Then—so then*. As much as to say, “This is the conclusion—we admit the fact.” *Also to the Gentiles*, (emphatic, as the great

ch. 8:1.

19 ¶ Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20 And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which

point in dispute,) *hath God granted* (as His free gift and out of His sovereign grace, ch. 5:31,) *repentance*, lit., *the repentance unto life*. OBSERVE. — How quietly and fraternally the primitive Church settled their controversies in the presence of the Spirit's work. (See ch. 6:1, 7.) Afterwards, however, this section of Jewish Christians became more difficult to conciliate. (See ch. 15:5.)

§ 19. THE FIRST GENTILE CHURCH. *Antioch in Syria*. Ch. 11:19-24.

"The mystery hid from ages," the economy or dispensation of which Paul was appointed to preach, begins now to be actually unfolded in the history of the first Gentile Church, the Mother Church of Gentile Christendom. It will now be seen — what was for so many ages hidden, and what could never have been known except by Divine revelation — that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel, Eph. 3:3-6.

19. The introduction of the Gospel to the Gentiles, as a great fact in the economy of grace, has now been set forth, so far as connected with Peter and his vision. The narrative now goes back to those dispersed Christians, who at Stephen's persecution went out from Jerusalem in different quarters, preaching the word, (ch. 8:2-4,) not only in Samaria, but quite outside of the Holy Land, as here appears. Here occurs a development of the Church in the same direction, but from quite a different point. Whether this ingathering at Antioch occurred after that at Cesarea, or simultaneously with it, is not stated. Though the dispersion occurred about A. D. 37, it is not certain how soon they reached Antioch, nor how soon afterwards Barnabas was sent down to them. We may sup-

pose that these events were brought to pass at about the same time in both places, under these different ministries, and this latter event without the knowledge of the former. Yet it seems to have been four or five years after the dispersion before the two Apostolic Missionaries labored together there. See § 20. ¶ *Scattered abroad upon* — or, *who had dispersed in flying from the persecution that arose upon Stephen* — or, *on account of Stephen* — growing out of his debates and death. ¶ *Traveled*. Lit., *Passed through the Holy Land, &c.* ¶ *Phenice*. The Phenician coast north of Palestine, including the great cities of Tyre, and Sidon, and Beirut. Our Lord had visited the borders of that region, (Matt. 15:21.) ¶ *Cyprus*. The famous island in the Mediterranean, opposite this Phenician coast, and connected with it by commerce, having such ports as Salamis on the east side and Paphos on the west, where Paul and Barnabas afterwards labored. See ch. 13:6. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus. ¶ *Antioch*. This was the great capital of Syria, only second to Rome and Alexandria in the whole empire; the chief seat of enterprise and wealth looking toward the west. These points in Phenicia, and the island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean, and the city of Antioch in Syria, were in Gentile regions, and yet it is here expressly recorded that these dispersed ones from the Jerusalem Church, as they went preaching the word, were confined in their ministrations *to the Jews alone*. And this is said as preparatory to the important fact which is announced in the next verse, that *some* of this dispersion preached *to the Gentiles* at Antioch.

20. And. Rather, *but* — in distinction from the foregoing. It is here mentioned that some of those dispersed Christians preached not to Jews only,

when they were come to Antioch, spake unto 'the Gre- <sup>9 ch. 6:11 and</sup> <sub>9:29.</sub> cians, preaching the Lord Jesus.

but to the Gentiles also. Some were men of Cyprus, natives of that island, and of Cyrene, in Africa. They were not any of the Apostles—nor such as Philip, the deacon and evangelist, at Samaria—but private Christians. This is a new feature—that those unofficial disciples preach the Gospel, not in a formal, official way, yet as witness-bearers—"light bearers in the world"—publishing the good news wherever they went—as it was already recorded, ch. 8: 4. **Observe.**—Private Christians ought, in their spheres, to publish the Gospel. They regard this as the exclusive duty of ministers, and hence not only do they not preach officially in the pulpit, as they have no license to do, but they do not proclaim the good news as they might and ought to do, in conversation, by tracts, and daily manifold means. Until private Christians go out publishing the Gospel, there will be a fearful lack of instrumentalities in Christ's service, and the world will not be converted to God. ¶ *Cyrene.* In Libya, Africa, (some think the same as Cairo,) from which was "Simon of Cyrene," who bare Christ's cross, and Lucius of Cyrene, ch. 13: 1; Mark 15: 21. There was a synagogue of the Cyreneans at Jerusalem, ch. 6: 9. ¶ *The Grecians.* The received Greek text has the word "*Hellenists*"—but the reading more commonly adopted of late, is *Greeks*—the original term being nearly the same. Gentiles are probably meant in distinction from Jews, vs. 19. It would be nothing new to record the carrying of the Gospel to the Hellenists; while the object of the historian just here, is to record the steps by which the Mother Christian Church of the Gentiles was established at Antioch. This preaching—"evangelizing"—seems to have been done independently of the movement at Caesarea. Who these were is not stated—only that they were *some of the dispersion*, who pursued a different course from that of those just mentioned in

vs. 19, and who, as a special and noted feature of things, proclaimed as glad tidings the Lord Jesus unto the Grecians or Gentiles. A question has arisen here, whether these who are referred to as preaching the word, had been formally set apart for this work. In ch. 8: 4, it is recorded that the dispersion—without distinction—"they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." An instance is recorded of this preaching—that of Philip, the deacon, who was also "the Evangelist." But these in vs. 20, are spoken of as "*some of the dispersion who were men of Cyprus and Cyrene.*" The impression would seem to be that they were private members, and that at this crisis, when all the energies of the Church are to be brought out, a great work is to be done by the Church membership, who, driven abroad by persecution, and speaking of Jesus and publishing the good news in their private spheres, are made instrumental of gathering the first Gentile Church. At any rate, the Holy Spirit has not chosen to give any prominence to any ecclesiastical office in this case; and we are left fairly to infer that they were unofficial men, who were the publishers of the good news here at the threshold of the great missionary work. This example gives no countenance to official preaching by unordained men against the proper order of Christ's house, where it is established. But it points to the proper calling of private Christians to go abroad in all their spheres of daily business as publishers of the Gospel. God will every where bless such witness-bearing of the discipleship. The age and crisis then specially called for it. The present time demands it also. And now, when the Church stands again at the threshold of her great missionary work—and is having new visions of her duty to the nations, the crisis demands that all *Christians* go forth as publishers of the Gospel by all means in their power. When shall

† Luke 1: 66.  
chap. 2: 47.  
\* ch. 9: 35.

21 And \* the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and \* turned unto the Lord.

22 ¶ Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth  
\* ch. 9: 27. Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23 Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and \* exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

\* ch. 3: 5. 24 For he was a good man, and \* full of the Holy

the nations be evangelized, unless private Christians go abroad—merchants, mechanics, lawyers, physicians, farmers; and all, as well as ministers—holding forth the word of life, as light-bearers in the world. *Dean Alford*, of the Church of England, remarks that “the Lord was pleased here to keep the Apostles at Jerusalem and to send forth private individuals to preach the Gospel elsewhere, to show that he was not dependent upon ecclesiastical office, or the power and dignity given to certain men for the dispersion of His Gospel, but that he had made every Christian to be a declarer of, and missionary for His Gospel, at His own proper time, and in his own way.”—*Homilies*, p. 235.

21. *The hand of the Lord*, here means the Almighty power of God—the Spirit so applying the truth as to make it effectual to conviction and conversion. See Luke 1: 66. This was a seal of approbation set by God upon the work, according to the argument of Peter in the case of the Cesareans, vs. 17.

22. *Tidings*. Literally, *the report, or word*. ¶ *The church which was in Jerusalem*, was still the Mother Church. There were the Apostles, and there was the seat and centre, as yet, of the spreading Christianity. Of course they would soon get word of such a movement. ¶ *They sent forth*. They—the Church—including “the Apostles and brethren,” (see vs. 11,)—not merely “the Apostles,” as in the case of the movement at Samaria sending two of their number, (ch. 8: 14,)—but here the Church, now become familiar with this great fact of Church exten-

sion, and sending not an Apostle, but an Apostolic Missionary—*Barnabas*. This name means “son of exhortation and of consolation,” (ch. 4: 36,) and, though a layman, he may have been the best man for the occasion. He was a Hellenistic Jew, a native of Cyprus, and was thus prepared to sympathize with the “men of Cyprus,” who were already actively in the work. ¶ *That he should go—go through (the land) as far as to Antioch*—laboring as he went. The same terms are used as in vs. 19.

23. *Who having arrived, and seeing the grace of God*, (as displayed so manifestly in the conversion of the Gentiles,) *was glad*—rejoiced. Whatever his prejudices or fears may have been, the sight of such a gracious work affected his Christian heart, as every such ingathering affects true Christians. ¶ *Exhorted*. The term in the original is kindred to that which means “consolation” in the interpreting of his name, (ch. 4: 36,) “son of consolation,” or of *Paracleting*. He did, therefore, what would be indicated by his name. He made no plea for the ancient ceremonial, but simply, and in tender fidelity of address, urged them all to *cleave to—to stand by*—literally, *abide by* the Lord (Jesus,)—*with the purpose of heart* indicated in their movement, or that purpose which is essential, with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience.

24. *For*. This verse adds the explanation of this temper and conduct on the part of Barnabas; very much as if it had said, “For he was a ‘son of consolation’ indeed.” ¶ *A good man*. An Israelite indeed—a man of true

Ghost and of faith : ⁊ and much people was added unto the Lord. § vs. 21.  
ch. 6: 14.

25 Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul : ⁊ ch. 9: 30.

26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves || with the church, ⁊ and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. || Or, in the church.  
a ch. 26: 28.  
1 Pet. 4: 16.

Christian goodness, who would rejoice to see the good work of grace go forward any where, and among all people. OBSERVE.—Such a truly good man rejoices in conversions not only when they are within his own Church or denomination, but any and every where, if only souls are truly converted to Christ. The exhortation of such an one to such converts would be to cleave to the Lord, to adhere to Christ with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience. ¶ *Full of the Holy Ghost and of faith*—possessing the ordinary and special gifts of the Spirit in an ample measure. ¶ *Much people.* Literally, *a sufficient multitude.* This was the result of his labors among them. This record of accessions had been previously made, see ch. 2: 41, 47; 5: 14, and thus the advancing numbers of the Church are noted.

§ 20. BARNABAS SENT DOWN TO ANTIOCH BY THE CHURCH AT JERUSALEM  
—GOES AFTER PAUL TO TARSUS—  
PAUL'S SECOND VISIT TO JERUSALEM  
—THE DISCIPLES FIRST CALLED  
"CHRISTIANS." A. D. 42-43. Ch. 11: 25-30.

25. In ch. 9: 27, we find Barnabas introducing the converted Saul to the Apostles in Jerusalem, and vouching for him there, and soon after, that new Apostle was sent down to Tarsus, his native city, to save him from the persecuting crowd. Now this same Barnabas, naturally enough, thinks of such a man as the very one needed for this new field, because he knew of him as specially commissioned by God to the Gentiles, and as a faithful, earnest preacher of the Gospel, ready for laborious self-denying work, ch. 9: 27. It is not necessary to suppose that

19\*

Barnabas had any Church instructions to go after Saul in case the movement at Antioch should require it. It is much more probable, from the record, that it was by the Divine prompting that Barnabas took this step. It is an instance of the same kind of individual, spontaneous enterprise, which more and more develops now in the history of the Church, and which is connected with the establishment of this first Gentile Church—the Mother Church at Antioch. ¶ *To seek Saul.* Rather, *to seek out*—not knowing at which point he might be laboring, (Gal. 1: 21,) but naturally looking for him where he had been sent down from Jerusalem, (ch. 9: 27-30,) and at his native place.

26. *Found him.* The term indicates some special search, as though he may not have been at Tarsus, but was searched out and found at length. How long Saul had been thereabouts since his departure from Jerusalem, does not appear, and is variously calculated. Putting his conversion at A. D. 37, he went to Tarsus at A. D. 40, (Gal. 1: 21,) after a very brief visit to Jerusalem. He had probably labored somewhat in Syria and Cilicia, ch. 15: 23, 41, where he afterwards *confirmed* the Churches he had previously established, and he may have come to Antioch in A. D. 42, (see vs. 19.) ¶ *A whole year.* We may suppose this to have been the year 42-43, in which latter the prophecy of a famine would be delivered by Agabus, and these two Apostles would be found in A. D. 44, at Jerusalem, with the alms of the Church. ¶ *They assembled (together) with the church.* They convened in the public and social assemblies for Christian worship and instruction, and they



b ch. 2:17, and  
13:1, and 15:  
32, and 21:9.  
1 Cor. 12:13.  
Eph. 4:11.  
c ch. 21:10.

27 ¶ And in these days came <sup>b</sup> prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch.

28 And there stood up one of them named <sup>a</sup> Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great dearth throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cæsar.

*taught much people*—(literally, *a sufficient multitude*.) This is what they actually accomplished. Their labors were ample. ¶ *Christians*. Now that Jews and Gentiles were to be gathered into one Church and communion, it was ordered in God's providence, that the body of believers should receive *a new name*, not national, but universal, and equally good for all people and all times; "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision," &c. (Col. 3:11.) The fact is here recorded that "the Disciples" (or followers of Christ,) were **FIRST CALLED CHRISTIANS** here at Antioch, where the first Gentile Church was established. This name could not have been assumed by themselves, because it is used only twice in the New Testament besides this, and in a way to imply that it was a term of reproach and for which they were called to suffer. 1 Peter 4:16; ch. 26:28. Nor could it have been given to them by the Jews, for they would not thus have acknowledged the Messiahship of Jesus by applying the term Christ (or Messiah,) to his disciples. It was doubtless given to them by the heathen as a suitable name for distinguishing this body who were more and more prominent as followers of Christ, and would naturally be known by a name that should signify their relation to Him. The term itself seems to be rather of Roman than Greek origin. Yet it was doubtless also by the Divine ordainment that this should come to be their name, and the word signifying *called*, elsewhere means *called* by God, or by Divine direction. (Matt. 2:12, 22; ch. 10:22; Heb. 8:5; 11:7.) This was more than ten years after Christ left the earth. They accepted this name, however reproachfully intended, and they gloried in it; and often when threatened before ma-

gistrates their only answer was, "*I am a Christian*."

27. *In these days*. During this year which Paul and Barnabas spent at Antioch, vs. 26. ¶ *Prophets*. These are referred to, chap. 13:1; see also 15:32; 19:6; 21:9, 10. These were special inspired teachers, who, like the Prophets of the Old Testament, declared and expounded the will of God, not merely nor mainly predicting future events, as Agabus, but acting as messengers of God to the people. They spake under the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost. This gift of New Testament prophesying is ranked by Paul above the gift of tongues. (1 Cor. 14:1, &c.) ¶ *From Jerusalem*. This would indicate the interest felt by the Mother Church at Jerusalem in this first Gentile Church, and these prophets may have been specially commissioned, as Barnabas was, though this does not appear, (vs. 19, 21.) They are again referred to, and several of them are named, in ch. 13:1.

28. *Stood up*. This was a formal prediction. ¶ *Agabus*. This prophet is named again, ch. 21:10, 11, where he foretold that Paul should be delivered up to the Gentiles. ¶ *Signified—made known*. See Rev. 1:1. ¶ *By the Spirit*. By inspiration, and as directly communicated to Him by the Holy Spirit. So in ch. 21:10, where he prophesies, it is said, "These things saith the Holy Ghost." ¶ *Dearth—famine*. Josephus speaks of it in the same terms. ¶ *Throughout all the world*. The word here rendered "*world*" means "*inhabited world*." But it is often used of a particular country, and might here be confined to Palestine. See vs. 29. Or it might mean the Roman Empire. (See Luke 2:1.) ¶ *Claudius*. No less than *four famines*

29 Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send <sup>d</sup>relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea. <sup>d</sup> Rom. 15: 26.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 16: 1.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. 9: 1.

30 <sup>e</sup>Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul. <sup>e</sup> ch. 12: 28.

are on record during this reign, which began A. D. 41, and continued thirteen years. At Rome, in the second year of his reign—in Greece, in the ninth year—in the tenth year at Rome again. And in the fourth to the seventh years of his reign, the famine raged in Judea—many persons died. These are mentioned by such historians as Dio Cassius, Eusebius, Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius. Queen Helena, of Adiabne, sent to Alexandria and Cyprus for supplies to relieve the Jews.

29. *The disciples.* It would seem from the prompt determination of the Christians at Antioch to relieve those in Judea, that the prediction was understood as referring to Judea and not to the whole empire, else they must have been unable so to determine when the famine would equally involve themselves. Some have understood, however, that the famine was understood as including themselves, yet that on account of the persecution at Jerusalem, or for other reasons, the brethren in Judea were the poorest, and they felt a very special desire to show their gratitude for spiritual favors received from them. Else, this record may mean, that when the famine broke out in Judea, the brethren in Antioch promptly took measures to send relief. ¶ *Every man.* Lit., *And of the disciples, as any one was prospered, they determined each of them to send* (something) *for (unto) relief (ministration) to the brethren who dwell in Judea.* See 1 Cor. 16: 2. This beneficent movement showed the love which this first Gentile Church bore toward the Jewish Christians, extending to them already, at the first opportunity, the hand of fraternal service, and disarming all Jewish prejudice (we might suppose,) by such prompt liberality. They would minister in temporal things to those who had served them in spirit-

ual things. ¶ *According to his ability.* We observe that the same principle was adopted by them as is recommended by Paul, (1 Cor. 16: 2.) And we infer hence that this may have been the principle of community of goods such as was practiced at the beginning. See *Notes*, ch. 2: 44.

30. They not only determined to do this, when they heard the prediction, but they *did it*. ¶ *To the elders—Ruling Elders of the Christian Church.* This office in the Christian Church is here first mentioned, and in a way to imply that it had been established from the beginning, as no notice is given of its institution. It was found in the Jewish Church from the earliest time, and the eldership was an office of the Jewish synagogue in the time of our Lord. It was retained naturally in the Christian Church, as the only office that had come down from the beginning as belonging to the ancient Church constitution. Hence no notice would be given of it in the early Church of Jewish Christians, but only afterwards, in the organization of Gentile Churches, (see ch. 14: 23.) The *elders* in the New Testament Church are of two kinds, either the same as bishops, or they are the *ruling elders* of the Christian Churches who are probably here meant, whose office was the oversight and rule of the Church in connection with the minister or pastor.—This was Paul's second visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, see ch. 12: 25. It seemed proper that Barnabas, who had been sent down from the Church at Jerusalem to minister to them in spiritual things, and Paul, his associate in the good work, should be the agents for carrying back to the Jewish Church of Christ this token of affection and gratitude from this first Gentile Church. See ch. 12: 25. **OBSERVE.**—The polity of the Christian

## CHAPTER XII.

1 Or, began.

1 Now about that time Herod the king || stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church.

α Matt. 4 : 21,  
and 20 : 23.

2 And he killed James \* the brother of John with the sword.

3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he pro-

Church was not that of the Temple, but that of the synagogues, which all along had anticipated, in part, the New Testament order of things, furnishing opportunity for worship "in every place." This is now commonly admitted, even by those evangelical Churches who have adopted a prelatical order. Principal *Macbride*, of Oxford, in his recent "*Lectures on the Acts*," &c. says: "The Christian special worship did not originate with the Apostles, for the model was already extant, though not in the Temple, but in the synagogue. The true God had selected a single spot for the sacrificial worship which He had Himself ordained, but it was a duty in every place to render Him the homage of prayer and praise. The synagogue and the Temple had no connection with each other, though the Jews worshiped in both; and the service of the former was conducted not by the priests, but by the rulers, (of the synagogue,) and they delegated, at their discretion, the office of reading and exhortation to whom they pleased."

## CHAPTER XII.

§ 21. THE FIRST ROYAL PERSECUTOR OF THE CHURCH—JEWISH HOSTILITY AT ITS HEIGHT—MURDER OF THE APOSTLE JAMES THE BROTHER OF JOHN, BY HEROD—PETER IMPRISONED — MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE — JUDICIAL DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA AT CESAREA. *Jerusalem*. A. D. 44. Ch. 12 : 1-23.

1. *About that time.* This is about the time of the visit just mentioned, (ch. 11 : 30,) of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem and Judea with the alms. It must have been about A. D. 44, as this was the year in which Herod died.

The second persecution at Jerusalem was now begun by Herod Agrippa, first grandson of Herod the Great, who is spoken of, Matt. 2 : 1, 3. He went to Rome to accuse Herod Antipas — was imprisoned by Tiberius, but was released by Caligula, and presented with the Tetrarchy of Philip; afterwards obtained Galilee and Perea, and then was granted by Claudius the rule of Samaria and Judea; so that he now held the title of King over the land of Palestine. See *Josephus Antiq.* B. xix. ch. 5, § 1. ¶ *Stretched forth his hands.* Rather, *laid his hands on certain of those who were of the Church to injure them.* Those who were recognized as Church members, as belonging to the Christian Church at Jerusalem, were laid hold on by Herod, not excepting the Apostles.

2. *James* — one of the sons of Zebedee, the brother of John, and one of the three admitted to Christ's special intimacy, who was now, according to Christ's prediction, (Matt. 20 : 23,) baptized with the same baptism as his Lord. ¶ *Sword.* Probably by cutting off the head, as in case of John the Baptist. *Paley* notices the accuracy of the writer, as there was no time within thirty years before, nor ever afterwards, when there was a King of Judea at Jerusalem, except in these last three years of Herod's life. It would seem that James was the first of the Apostles who died, and John the last. This James is the only Apostle whose death is recorded in the Scripture. *Beheading* was regarded as very ignominious.

3. Until the first persecution, (Stephen's,) the popular feeling from the time of Pentecost had been in favor of the Church, 2 : 47 ; 5 : 13 ; 6 : 7 ; but now it had taken the opposite direction. *And seeing it is pleasant to the Jews*

ceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were <sup>b</sup> the days <sup>5</sup> Exod. 12:14, 15, and 23:18. of unleavened bread.)

4 And <sup>c</sup> when he had apprehended him, he put *him* in <sup>6</sup> John, 21:18. prison, and delivered *him* to four quaternions of soldiers to keep him; intending after Easter to bring him forth to the people.

5 Peter therefore was kept in prison: but || prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.

¶ Or, *intense and earnest prayer was made.*  
2 Cor. 1:11.  
Eph. 6, 18.  
1 Thoss. 5:17.

6 And when Herod would have brought him forth, the

Whatever his motive in killing James. the popularity was now the motive for a further cruelty. ¶ *Proceeded.* Lit., *he added to take.* A Hebraism for, *he went on, or proceeded further to arrest.* This unprincipled courting of popularity is the character given of this Herod by Josephus. ¶ *Peter.* Herod seems to have aimed at the most eminent of the Apostles. Peter had been very prominent in the work of the Church, and as the Apostle of the circumcision for propagating the Gospel among the Jews, he was naturally very obnoxious to them. OBSERVE.—We read of no attempt to fill this vacancy, nor any idea of an Apostolical succession. ¶ *The days*—during which the festival of unleavened bread continued—the seven days immediately following the Paschal Supper, and so called, because during this time the bread eaten must be unleavened. The Passover festival is often spoken of as including these days, (vs. 4.)

4. *Whom also having seized, he put him in prison.* It was held unlawful among the Jews to execute criminals on their feast days, and therefore he would put him under guard until after the festival. ¶ *Four quaternions.* A guard of *four*, relieving each other every three hours during the four watches of the night, according to the Roman military divisions of time. Sixteen soldiers composed the whole detachment. These guards of four kept watch, two inside the prison and two outside. ¶ *To keep him.* Literally, *to guard him.* The noun of this verb is that used, vs. 4, for “prison.” ¶ *After Easter.* Literally, *after the Passover.* It should so have been rendered. *Eas-*

*ter* is the name of the festival which many Christians keep in commemoration of Christ's resurrection. But no such name was then in use, except that the Pagans kept a festival in honor of their goddess *Eostre*, or Venus, in the month of April, and about the same time of the Passover. The name, however, though not at all found in the original, was used in some of the older versions, and from those versions it passed into our present version by express order of King James. After the festival days, that is, after the 21st Nisan, Peter was to have been slain. ¶ *Bring him forth.* To lead him out—as the Romans used to make public spectacles of criminals at their games.

5. *Kept*—not the same word as in vs. 4. It is here used to note the delay thus providentially brought about, giving opportunity for the prayers of the Church. ¶ *But.* While he was thus kept in prison, PRAYER WAS GOING ON—being kept up—*was being carried on.* (προσευχή.) ¶ *Without ceasing.* Literally, *stretched out, intense, urgent—strained.* This was “the energizing supplication of the righteous.” James 5:16. ¶ *Of the church,* (at Jerusalem.) *From*—by the Christian membership, here designated again as *the Church*, one body of believers, though they may have been of different divisions. Their prayer was made to God for him, in the confidence that He was greater than Herod. NOTE.—It was (1) *concerted* prayer, as at Pentecost; (2) *definite*, for an object: (3) *personal*, for Peter; (4) *wrestling*, like Jacob's.

6. *When.* Doubtless several days were passed by Peter in prison. When Herod was just about to bring him

same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains : and the keepers before the door kept the prison in  
cf ch. 5 : 19.

7 And, behold, <sup>a</sup>the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison : and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands.

8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

forth (see vs. 4,) to the people to gratify the Jewish crowd by putting him to death. ¶ *The same night.* On the very eve of his executing the cruel purpose, the very night before it was to be done. ¶ *Sleeping.* He seems to have been calm and composed, quite in contrast with his fear and cowardice in the judgment hall at the trial of his Master. ¶ *Between.* It was the Roman custom to chain a prisoner to a guard, fastening the right wrist of the prisoner to the left wrist of the soldier. Sometimes, however, for greater security, the prisoner was chained to a double guard, to one soldier on each side of him. So here. ¶ *The keepers.* And *keepers* (guards,) before the door were guarding the prison. These were probably the other pair of the quaternion, on guard for this watch of the night. It was death to the Roman guards to have a prisoner escape.

7. *Behold,* (this was the amazing fact,) *the angel of the Lord,* (literally, *an angel of the Lord*)—miraculously commissioned and working—*came upon* (him.) Literally, *stood upon*—(the spot,) and (a) *light shined* (a supernatural light from the angel, revealing the angel to Peter, and lighting up the apartment for his escape,) *in the prison.* (Literally, *in the dwelling*—chamber or apartment—where he was confined.) ¶ *He smote*—literally, *the side of Peter.* This term implies a violent blow. ¶ *Raised him up*—*roused him,* (from sleep,) used of Christ's being awaked from sleep in the vessel, Luke 8 : 24. ¶ *Arise up.* The intimation is of rising up by a resurrection, as from death or disability. The noun is the word for resurrection from the

dead. This word of command was accompanied by a Divine power, loosing his hands from the chains. OBSERVE.—So always when Christ means to release us from our bondage of sin and death, He speaks His Gospel command with a power accompanying, by which the chains fall off from our souls. OBSERVE.—The soldiers chained to him were probably not awaked. Our deliverance cannot be prevented by all the powers of hell.

8. *Gird thyself.* He had been ungirded for the night, and now in the midst of his amazement, as he would be naturally bewildered from this sudden arousing, he was commanded to gird himself—or gird his coat or under garment around him, thus preparing for action. There was time and opportunity for thus dressing himself. ¶ *Bind on.* Literally, *bind under*—as the sandals were worn on the sole of the foot. This was his preparation to walk, and implied that he was to go somewhere. Though nothing was as yet said to him about his deliverance, he must already have felt a hope that this was to be accomplished. ¶ *And so he did.* How cheerfully the awakened sinner aims to obey the heavenly command when already he feels the hope of salvation. Yet it was only too good news to be true, (vs. 19.) ¶ *Cast thy garment.* This was the cloak, or upper garment, a loose robe thrown around the shoulders, and worn over the tunic, or under-coat, which had already been fastened with the girdle. ¶ *Follow me.* How gracious is this Gospel command. No task, no drudgery, though the natural mind thus views it—but a call to follow the

9 And he went out, and followed him; and <sup>e</sup> wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. e Ps. 135: 1.  
f ch. 10: 3-17,  
add 11: 5.

10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; <sup>e</sup> which opened to them of his own accord; and they went out, and passed on through one street: and forthwith the angel departed from him. g ch. 16: 26.

11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of

great Rescuer and Saviour out of our prison. Not any austere demand of a task-master for service—but a gracious invitation bidding us come on after Him who undertakes to break up our bondage and lead us safely into the liberty of the Gospel.

9. *Went out.* Literally, *and having gone forth*, (from his apartment,) *he followed him.* Oh! how cheerfully, just in proportion as he saw what was doing in all these directions for his deliverance. ¶ *Wist not.* Literally, *and he did not know that it is true*, (real, matter of fact,) *that which was done* (came to pass,) *by the angel, but thought he saw a vision*, (like that he lately saw in Joppa.) It seemed only too good to be true. He could not fully believe that such Divine and infinite love was shown to him. It seemed rather as if it was an exhibition to him of the scene without the reality—as we say, it seemed like a dream. So the newly awakened sinner doubts the reality of the Gospel salvation—cannot credit it as having actually and personally come to pass—and for him. It is so wonderful; so contrary to all human grounds of expectation. What! that I, a poor guilty sinner, should be visited by Jesus Christ and bidden to rise up and be delivered and saved by His power and grace! Impossible! I deceive myself!—But it is all true, and more! Blessed be God!

10. *And they having passed the first and second prison*, (guard—*φυλακην*.) The term for prison is the same as in vs. 4, and Peter was kept in the inner prison. Some understand this of the first and second guard, (of soldiers,) but they were rather the wards of the prison between Peter's dungeon and

the street. ¶ *Iron gate.* The outer gate, which was most strongly constructed of iron, securing the entrance to the city. ¶ *Which opened.* Here was another miraculous demonstration along the path of his deliverance. How must his faith now be confirmed. OBSERVE.—How many such Almighty interpositions are there for the Christian by which solid iron gates open to him, as if by some life of their own! How gradual also is the believer's deliverance. First he passes through one apartment, then through another—always nearing the point of entire release—and at length “the iron gate of death” itself is passed—not by being broken down; no, but it opens to him. That fearful, frowning barrier flies open to him as he approaches, (*of his own accord—αὐτοῦτης*: of itself—of its own motion, without any visible cause,) and death, that seemed so impossible to meet, as if only armed with terrors, gives him a free and pleasant passage to his home in heaven. ¶ *And they went out.* The angel did not leave him at the prison door, but accompanied him on his way through one street, till he was beyond the reach of the prison and safely rescued. ¶ *Forthwith—immediately.* From that point of safety, the angel left him to pursue his way. God will have us use our own exertions, and work out our own salvation, after He has put us on the path of His wonderful deliverance and really led us out of our prison. And the encouragement is, that it is He who worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, (Phil. 2: 12.)

11. *Peter having come to himself*—having recovered<sup>d</sup> his consciousness and

A Ps. 84:7.  
Dan. 5:28, and  
6:22.  
Heb. 1:14.  
f Job 5:19.  
Ps. 33:18, 19,  
and 34:22, and  
41:2, and 97:10.  
2 Cor. 1:10.  
2 Pet. 2:9.  
2 ch. 4:23.  
2 ch. 15:37.  
m vs. 5.

¶ Or, to ask who  
was there.

surety, that <sup>a</sup>the Lord hath sent his angel, and <sup>1</sup>hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

12 And when he had considered *the thing* <sup>k</sup>he came to the house of Mary the mother of <sup>1</sup>John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together <sup>m</sup>praying.

13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate a damsel came <sup>||</sup> to hearken, named Rhoda.

composure, after such overwhelming surprise and bewildering excitement. ¶ *Now I know.* He had doubted, distrustful, feared it was all too good to be true. Now, he is assured of all the power and grace in this amazing interposition, and that it can be from God alone. However others may mistake the doctrine of election, the Christian finds it out in his experience, and he makes it his joy and boast, that God has wrought out his salvation for him. But alas! how many go halting and hesitating and unassured, and have, therefore, no animating hope, to work by love, and overcome the world! But Paul could say, "*I know,*" "*We know.*" (2 Tim. 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:1.) ¶ *Of a surety.* Truly, certainly. Before this he did not know that it was true, (vs. 9,) but thought he saw a vision—a mere bright vision of so glorious an event. ¶ *Hath sent.* Literally, *hath sent forth*, by special commission. He now saw the blessed reality. ¶ *Hath delivered.* The thing was done. The Christian is encouraged to look upon his own deliverance as wrought out; not as to be done on certain conditions, and all contingent—but as accomplished—Christ has died. We are raised up together with Him—washed, justified, sanctified, so that the redemption is actually effected and carrying out accordingly. ¶ *Expectation.* The wicked expectation of the people, for whose pleasure Herod was intending to slay the Apostle, (vs. 3.)

12. *Considered.* Rather, *Having become aware* of where he was, and how he was situated. The term is so used, ch. 14:6, where only it is found besides here. As soon as he recovered his composure, and realized his situa-

tion distinctly, as to the particulars. ¶ *Mary.* She was the sister of Barnabas. It would seem that this was the well-known residence of Mary, but whether it was her own property or not is not certain. She is here distinguished among the Marys by her son, *John Mark.* Blessed are the mothers who are known by their pious sons. This Disciple is mentioned by Paul as his fellow laborer, (Col. 4:10; 2 Tim. 4:11; Philemon 24,) and is probably the same whom Peter calls "his son" (1 Pet. 5:13,) in the faith, his convert; and he is also mentioned in verse 25, and afterwards, ch. 13:13; 15:37-39. It is generally agreed that he is the Mark who wrote the Gospel history which bears his name. He is sometimes called simply "Mark," and elsewhere "John"—the former being his Greek name, the latter his Hebrew name. ¶ *Where many.* Here an important fact is stated, which indeed accounts for all the astonishing facts already mentioned. It was this *prayer-meeting* for Peter (v. 5,) which secured his miraculous deliverance. It is a remarkable instance of God's hearing the special prayers of His people, and working out for them amazing results accordingly. This was a striking fulfillment of Christ's promise, (Mark 18:19.) NOTE.—The answer was (1) *prompt*—the same night. (2) *Triumphant* against all earthly impossibilities. (3) *Astonishing to all*—to the prayer-meeting, to Peter, to the persecutors.

13. Oriental houses have a door on the street, opening into the vestibule or porch, and tended by a maid-servant, (John 18:16.) This is still the custom, as we found at Jerusalem, Damascus, and other places of the East,

14 And when she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for gladness, but ran in, and told how Peter stood before the gate.

15 And they said unto her, Thou art mad. But she constantly affirmed that it was even so. Then said they,

It is his angel.

<sup>n</sup> Gen. 48:16.  
Matt. 18:10.

16 But Peter continued knocking: and when they had opened *the door*, and saw him, they were astonished.

where we entered the dwellings of wealthy Jews. ¶ *To hearken.* The portress was called in the Greek, *the hearer*—listener, her business being to hear who was there, and to obey the call. See *margin.* ¶ *Named Rhoda.* So particular is the account given by Luke, not as a forger of history would do, who would be anxious to avoid giving names for fear of detection. This name in Greek means *rosebush*, according to the custom of giving names from trees and flowers. It is the habit in the East for visitors to stand at the outer gate and call out, or knock, to give warning of their coming. See ch. 10:17, 18.

14 *And when she knew*—recognizing Peter's voice from his reply to her inquiry who was there. She either knew him by his familiar tone of voice, (Matt. 26:73,) or by his answer to her question. It was very natural that in her excitement, when she recognized that Peter, for whose deliverance many were actually at prayer in the house, was on the spot, she should run back to them for joy without opening the door. ¶ *The gate—the vestibule, porch.* What an announcement to that prayer-meeting. Your prayer is heard, while you are yet speaking. Dan. 9:20.

15. *Thou art mad.* Thus unbelieving were they even while they prayed, not able to credit what they ought to have surely expected in answer to their prayers. How commonly do Christians pray without the remotest expectation that their petitions will be granted in direct response to their prayer. How little confidence in the promises, or even in God as alive to the request. But he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder, &c., (Heb. 11:6.) ¶ *Constantly affirmed—kept stoutly in-*

*sisting.* They doubted and denied. She knew. ¶ *His angel.* This is their last resort—as some would superstitiously say, It is his ghost. The Jews, however, held the doctrine of a *guardian angel* belonging to each person, or each believer, and it is held by some modern commentators as well as ancient ones, that our Lord taught this doctrine in Matt. 18:10. See *Notes.* Such an idea of a good and evil genius attending each person was common with the heathen. Calvin says, "The notion of a guardian angel attached to each individual, is at variance with the whole teaching of Scripture, which testifies that angels encamp round about the righteous, and that not one angel alone but many are charged with the protection of each of the faithful." (Heb. 1:14.) The angel who delivered Peter is not spoken of by Luke as Peter's angel, but as the angel of the Lord. And Peter had no such thought, for he says, "I know that the Lord hath sent *His* angel." The notion that it was Peter's angel, whatever the terms meant in the mouth of these persons at Mary's house, is not of any authority from their saying, nor is it entitled to any weight with us. Indeed, it would rather seem that they were altogether bewildered and mistaken, and had just denied the possibility that it was Peter, and are quite likely to have entertained any absurd notion, rather than the truth of the case.

16. *Continued.* The term is a strong one, and means *persevered.* ¶ *Had opened.* It was in their first wild excitement that they had denied and speculated. Now they put the news to the test, as they should at first have done, and behold the glad reality. So Christ says to all the doubting, halting, and disbelieving, "*Come and see.*"



o ch. 13:16, and  
19:33, and 21:  
40.

17 But he \*beckoning unto them with the hand to hold their peace, declared unto them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison. And he said, Go shew these things unto James, and to the brethren. And he departed, and went into another place.

18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he

17. *Beckoning.* The term means, *motioning with the hand downwards.* The natural gesture for commanding silence in an uproar, ch. 13:16. ¶ *Declared.* He at once reports the facts. The Gospel is a narrative of *facts* on which we are to rest our faith and hope of salvation. Here the term implies a detailed narrative. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell what He hath done for my soul," (Ps. 66:16.) Christians can report to others the facts of their deliverance. ¶ *The Lord—the Lord Jesus—the risen Lord—who "sent His angel,"* (vs. 11.) Whoever may have been instrumental in our salvation, it is to God that we ascribe it, and Christians will acknowledge His love as having moved in their salvation from all eternity, and planned and prompted all the means. ¶ *Go shew.* This is the language of Peter. ¶ *James.* It is natural to suppose that this is James the son of Alphaeus, who is commonly called the Less; and who is the only one of this name among the Apostles, since James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, had just been put to death. This James is the only other one of this name previously spoken of in the history, and it is inferred that it is he who is called the Lord's brother, or near relative, Gal. 1:19. Some suppose, however, that this James here spoken of, and in Gal. 1, 2, is quite another person, the real brother of our Lord, and not an Apostle. In either case this James was very prominent in the Church at Jerusalem, and at the Synod, (ch. 15.) This James is sometimes called "the Apostle of the Transition." See *Notes on Ch. 15.* The importance of his position would seem to be the rea-

son why he is particularly mentioned here. ¶ *Departed.* The fact also that Peter intended immediately to depart from Jerusalem, would be a reason for this direct message to him from Peter; and perhaps it was implied also, that James was now to take a special charge of the Church in that city: while Peter should now feel his own special connection with Jerusalem at an end. There is no hint of the place to which Peter went: and here the particular narrative of Peter's labors breaks off. He is spoken of afterwards (ch. 15,) as at Jerusalem, at the Synod.—There is no proof that Peter went to Rome either now or at any other time—but much proof to the contrary.

18. *Day.* It is argued that Peter must have been delivered during the last watch of the night, (3 to 6, A. M.) else his escape must have been discovered at the change of the guard. ¶ *Stir. Troubling,* (Wiclif,) disturbance arising out of trouble. ¶ *Soldiers.* This probably includes the entire guard of sixteen soldiers, (the four quaternions,) to whom the keeping of Peter had been intrusted—though of course they, during whose watch he had escaped, would be the ones who would tremble for their lives. The penalty of letting a prisoner escape was death. ¶ *What.* Literally, *what then Peter had become, or was become* of Peter, (since he was missing.)

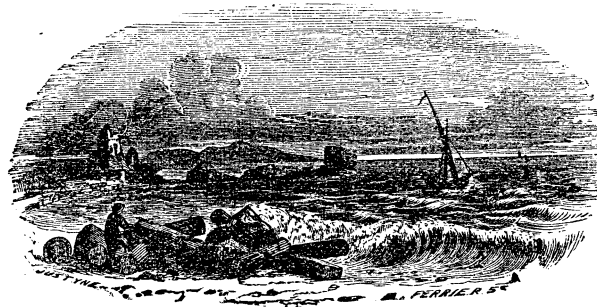
19. *He examined—put them on trial.* ¶ *The keepers.* Those of the guard who were on watch when he escaped. ¶ *Put to death.* Literally, *to be led away—to execution.* It was inferred that they must have been careless and unfaithful, else he could not have escaped. It is not hinted that they had any suspicion of his miraculous deliv-

examined the keepers, and commanded that *they* should be put to death. And he went down from Judea to Cesarea, and *there* abode.

20 ¶ And Herod ¶ was highly displeased with them of Tyre and Sidon: but they came with one accord to him, and, having made Blastus † the king's chamberlain their friend, desired peace; because ¶ their country was nourished by the king's *country*.

¶ Or, *have an hostile mind, intending war.*  
 † Gr. *that was over the king's bed-chamber.*  
 ¶ 1 Kings 5: 9, 11.  
 Ez. 27: 17.

ance. ¶ *He went down.* Herod about this time went from Jerusalem to Cesarea, the residence of the Roman governors, and though he commonly



resided at Jerusalem, yet, as Josephus tells us, he went down there now to preside at the public games in honor of the Emperor Claudius at his return from Britain, (*Jos. Ant.* xix. 82.) Here Agrippa resided, ch. 23: 35. By some providential means, the cruel king was led off from further persecution of the Mother Church at Jerusalem. Cesarea is now a naked ruin.

20. *Highly displeased.* Literally, of *hostile minds*—(see margin,) not necessarily meditating war, but of warlike feeling—with *them* (the people,) of *Tyre and Sidon*, (the Phenicians along the sea coast, north of Cesarea,) probably on account of some commercial interference. ¶ *They came with one accord.* This seems to intimate that they turned out, or that the cities united in sending *en masse*, a great *delegation*. The Mosaic polity had discouraged commerce, and the Phenicians carried on the foreign trade of the Holy Land. Tyre and Sidon were the chief ports,

and there, of course, the important interests centred which might come in conflict with Herod's authority. But as the Phenician country was a very narrow edge along the shore, it was their interest to live at peace with Herod. ¶ *Chamberlain.* Keeper of his bed-chamber, who thus came in familiar contact with the King; also, perhaps, his treasurer. ¶ *Their friend.* They gained his intercession. Literally, *having persuaded him*, perhaps by some private inducement, as of bribes; they desired for themselves peace, that is, *reconciliation*. ¶ *Because.* They could not afford to be at enmity, as they obtained their supplies of provision from the King's country, the Holy Land. Their own country, Phenicia, was too narrow and unproductive to sustain them, and Herod, by cutting off supplies, could easily reduce them to the greatest straits. Wheat, honey, oil, &c. were exported to Tyre. Ezek. 27: 17. The reason here given for

21 And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.

22 And the people gave a shout, *saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

23 And immediately the angel of the Lord <sup>g 1 Sam. 25: 23.</sup> smote him <sup>2 Sam. 24: 17.</sup> because <sup>r Ps. 115: 1.</sup> he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

24 ¶ But the <sup>• Isai. 55: 11.</sup> word of God grew and multiplied. <sup>ch. 6: 7, & 19: 20.</sup> <sup>Gal. 1: 6.</sup>

their coming may also imply that the famine had already commenced.

21. *Set day*—appointed day. According to some, it was the first of August, and the second day of the games. ¶ *Royal apparel*—brilliant with silver ornament, as Josephus relates, he came into the public amphitheatre, and sat upon his throne, or *bema*—raised seat—and he made an oration, literally, *spoke to the people*. ¶ *Unto them*—to the delegation—implying here that it was a mass delegation from the two cities.

22. *The people*, (ὁ δῆμος). This is a term which is not used for the crowd, but for the people in a formal and official capacity. ¶ *Gave a shout. Shouted out in response*, “*God’s voice and not man’s.*” This is their exclamation, so full of adoring applause. It is to be supposed that they were Gentiles, (perhaps led on by the Phenicians,) since no Jew could have used such words without willful blasphemy. Josephus records their words thus, “Be thou merciful unto us. If, indeed, until now we have revered thee as man — yet, henceforth we confess thee superior to mortal nature.”

23. *Immediately* — at once, in a way to show it to be a rebuke of such impiety. ¶ *The angel*. Rather, *an angel*. The same phrase as is used of the angel who delivered Peter. It may have been the same angel, or any other; an angel specially commissioned to do this work of death. Josephus narrates the fact of Herod’s sudden death, “within five days.” It is not necessary to suppose that the angel was visible. See 2 Kings 19: 35; 1 Chron. 21: 15, 16. Josephus remarks that Herod “did neither rebuke the people nor reject their profane flattery,” and goes on to mention some of his dread-

ful and peculiar sufferings which terminated in his death. ¶ *Because*. Luke states definitely what could be inferred from the narrative of Josephus, though the latter does not trace the awful visitation directly to the swift displeasure of God. ¶ *Eaten*. Literally, *Becoming worm-eaten*. Falling under the power of this awful disease, the same of which Antiochus Epiphanes, that wicked persecutor, and Herod the Great, also died. The infliction of death by the angel took this horrid shape, so as to make it most revolting and much more shocking than a sudden stroke of death. OBSERVE.—(1) We know from secular history that this event—the death of Herod—took place A. D. 44. Thus we have a certain date by which we are helped to form a chronological table of the history. See *Introduction*. Josephus tells us that it was in the fifty-fourth year of Herod’s age, and in the fourth of his reign, and it is supposed to have been about the first of August. (2) Antiochus Epiphanes and these Herods had been in their sphere the Anti-Christis who were predicted, and who all along foreshadowed “*that wicked,*” whom the Lord will consume, &c.

24. *But*. Notwithstanding the bloody persecutions which this hostile power of the world had attempted, and partly carried out, it was fulfilled as predicted in the second Psalm, vs. 9; and so the Church went on to prosper. This Divine interposition, releasing Peter and smiting Herod with swift judgment, would help forward the Church. ¶ *The word of God*. The Gospel had success, and its followers increased and multiplied. These notices of the Church’s progress are given all along in the history. (See ch. 5: 7)

25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, when they had fulfilled *their* || ministry, and 'took with them " John, whose surname was Mark.

¶ Or, charge.  
ch. 11: 29, 30.  
ch. 13: 5, 13  
and 15: 37.  
u vs. 12.

25. *Barnabas and Saul*—who were sent to Jerusalem with the alms of the Church at Antioch, (ch. 11 : 30,) now returned from Jerusalem, having fulfilled the ministry—*diakonian*, or commission, (upon which they were sent.) During this time, we suppose those events occurred in the case of Peter and Herod which are recorded in this intervening chapter, though it is not certain that Barnabas and Saul went to Jerusalem till after Herod's death. ¶ Took with them—from Jerusalem to Antioch—John the son of Mary, at whose house the prayer-meeting for Peter had been held, (ch. 12 : 12.) He was the nephew of Barnabas, and was afterwards (with some interruption,) a companion of his missionary journeys in connection with Paul, ch. 12 : 13 ; 15 : 37-39 ; and Paul (though with some misunderstanding) accounted him "profitable to him for the ministry," 2 Tim. 4 : 11. OBSERVE.—The Church at Jerusalem thus further recognizes the Church among the Gentiles. OBSERVE.—This chapter brings us to the next and closing part of the history—the extension of the Church among the Gentiles at large. Thus far we have had, (1) The founding of the Christian Church. (2) Its extension among the Jews. (3) Its extension among the Devout Gentiles. And now we pass from the Mother Church (at Jerusalem,) and from the labors of Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, to the first Gentile Church, (at Antioch,) and the labors of Paul the Apostle to the Gentiles, and the extension of the Church "to the uttermost ends of the earth."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## BOOK III.

PART II. *Spread of Christianity among the Idolatrous Gentiles—*  
"Witnesses unto the uttermost ends of the earth." A. D. 44-62. Chs. 13-15.

20\*

22. MISSIONARY COMMISSION OF PAUL AND BARNABAS BY THE CHURCH AT ANTIOCH. Ch. 13: 1-3.

We enter now upon a most important epoch in the Church's progress. The MISSIONARY CHARACTER of the Christian Church comes now into view. The great commission is now to be more fully entered on and fulfilled, "GO YE THEREFORE AND TEACH ALL NATIONS, BAPTIZING THEM," &c. Now Isaiah's distinct prophetic outline of the Church's progress comes to be history. See Isaiah 40 to 46. Antioch, the capital of Syria, and the chief seat of Eastern civilization toward the West, was now to be the second centre of the advancing Christianity. The great Apostle to the Gentiles was now to enter more extensively and formally upon the work to which he had been called. The Church of Christ was henceforth to be the united Church of Jews and Gentiles. Accordingly, the first two acts of this Mother Church of the Gentiles at Antioch were, to SEND ALMS to the poor Jews at Jerusalem in their extremity, and to SEND MISSIONARIES TO THE HEATHEN, far and wide—a pattern for all Gentile Churches.—Here begins the HISTORY OF MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN, UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. The great principle of bringing in the Gentiles had already been established, and Peter, the Apostle of the circumcision, was chosen by God to introduce it in the case of Cornelius. The ingathering there at Cesarea and here at Antioch, had been recognized as of God. And now the barriers of Judaism are fairly broken down—and the world is open to the great work of Missions. The Christian Church among the Gentiles at once owns her high calling, and enters upon the Master's commission, under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, Matt. 28 : 19-20. Hitherto the spread of the Gospel could be traced to the persecu-

## CHAPTER XIII.

a ch. 11 : 27, &  
14 : 36, & 15 : 35.  
b ch. 11 : 22-26.  
c Rom. 16 : 21.  
¶ Or, *Herod's*  
*foster-brother.*  
d Numb. 8 : 14.  
ch. 9 : 15, & 22 : 21.  
Rom. 1 : 1.  
Gal. 1 : 15, & 2 : 9.  
e Matt. 9 : 38.  
ch. 14 : 26.  
Rom. 10 : 15.  
Eph. 3 : 7, 8.  
1 Tim. 2 : 7.  
2 Tim. 1 : 11.

1 Now there were <sup>a</sup>in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers ; as <sup>b</sup>Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and <sup>c</sup>Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, ¶ which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, <sup>d</sup>Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work <sup>e</sup>whereunto I have called them.

tions at Jerusalem. — THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS *distinguishing this first Gentile Church are here noted.*

1. *The Church, (which was established and flourishing.—Bengel.)* Here the Church is recognized as established among the Gentiles—and the character of the body is noted as eminent for spiritual gifts and powers. ¶ *Prophets and teachers.* The prophets were all teachers, and sometimes foretold future events, as Agabus—though their office was generally to discourse in an elevated strain, under the extraordinary influence of the Holy Ghost, (ch 11 : 27.) The teachers were not all prophets but instructors in the word. See 1 Cor. 12 : 28 ; Eph. 4 : 11. Only “*certain*” of them, or a portion, are here named. Barnabas is first on the list, and Saul the last. It would seem from the text, that the three former were prophets and the two latter teachers. ¶ *Called Niger.* The surname leads us to infer that he was of Roman connection, though a Jew. We know nothing more of him. ¶ *Lucius.* In Rom. 16 : 21, such an one is spoken of. We see that he was also connected with the Gentiles—being of the same African city with the Simon who bore Christ’s cross, and with those who had first preached the Gospel at Antioch, (ch. 11 : 20.) See ch. 2 : 10 and Notes ¶ *Manaen.* A Jewish name. ¶ *Brought up with.* Rather, *Herod’s foster-brother*—having the same nurse with Herod. Josephus speaks of one of this name, an Essene, who prophesied of Herod the Great, while he was a boy at school, that he would be a king. ¶ *The tetrarch.* The Herod who

had put John the Baptist to death. OBSERVE.—All these here named were men specially noted as having some Gentile connections. Barnabas, too, was a Cyprian—and Saul was from the Cilician city of Tarsus. All these five had something linking them to the Gentiles whom they were to evangelize. Just so the twelve had been chosen for Israel from Israel. ¶ *Saul.* See ch. 15 : 35. That he is named last here, is ascribed by Bengel to his modesty, supposing him to have furnished the account. Barnabas is placed first, as the one sent from Jerusalem to them, and who introduced Saul, ch. 11 : 22.

2. *Ministered.* This term is taken from the Old Testament worship, and relates to the functions of the priestly office. In general, it would here express the idea of Divine worship in which these men officiated ; but it is used, perhaps, also to imply that the Old Testament priesthood is here realized in the New Testament prayer and praise. It is to show not that Judaism was to be perpetuated, even as in the rites of the Papacy, but to be merged and realized in Christianity. ¶ *Fasted.* Though they did not recognize distinctions of meats, as the Jewish institutions had required, they entered into the spirit of separation from the world. This fasting was probably with a special reference to the great interests of the Gentile world, as now opened upon them at Antioch. ¶ *The Holy Ghost,* probably by the agency of a prophet, as Lucius or Simeon. ¶ *Separate me—separate for me now.* This is an emphatic call for the formal appointment of these men. The term rendered

3 And 'when they had fasted and prayed, and laid <sup>1 ch. 6: 4.</sup> *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

4 ¶ So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to <sup>g ch. : 36.</sup> *Cyprus*.

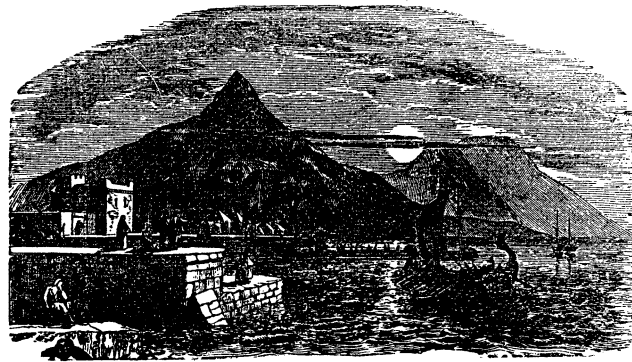
"separate" is applied to marking off lands, and implies a personal property in these men for this special service. ¶ *The work.* This work had already been made known to Paul at his conversion, (ch. 9 : 15, 16,) and to Barnabas at his coming to Antioch, or since. The persons spoken of in the context are they to whom this command was directly addressed, the prophets and teachers, but through them also to the Church which was at Antioch. This city had been called "the Queen of the East"—soon it got the name of "the City of God," and contained one hundred thousand Christians in the time of Chrysostom.

3. *Having fasted.* This was a special fasting and prayer, on the occasion of sending them forth with the laying on of hands. This simple ceremony of missionary commission was performed by the prophets and teachers, yet not in a way to exclude the Church membership from the fasting, and praying, and sending them away. Paul was already set apart as an Apostle, (ch. 9 : 15.) This was a temporary work of missionating, ch. 15 : 26, 27, not a

permanent office, to which they were here set apart. ¶ *Laid their hands*—that is, those named in vs. 1. It was no ordination to the work of the ministry. Paul and Barnabas had already been preachers, and recognized as such by the Church. ¶ *Sent them away*, by their authority in the Church organization. The Church sent them, while the formal act of commissioning them was done by the teachers. The distinctions are not nicely drawn and guarded here, because they were understood in the common order of the Church.

§ 23. PAUL'S FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY—FIRST SUCCESS—HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH PAGANISM. *Cyprus, Asia Minor.* A. D. 45. Ch. 13 : 4 to 14 : 28.

4. While they were sent forth by the Church, they were also sent out by the Holy Spirit with a special unction and instruction, all their route being under Divine direction. So Jesus was led forth by the Holy Spirit, (Luke 4 : 1, 14,) and His ministers have the same honor and privilege. ¶ *Seleucia.* This



h vs. 45.

5 And when they were at Salamis, <sup>h</sup> they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also <sup>i</sup> John to *their* minister.

f ch. 12: 25, and 15: 37.

k ch. 8: 9.

6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found <sup>k</sup> a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name *was* Bar-jesus:

was the seaport of Antioch on the Mediterranean Sea, at the mouth of the river Orontes. Antioch was sixteen and one-half miles distant by land, but about forty miles by the river. The missionaries thus stood on the edge of the Great Sea, looking out westward in the same course which the human family has taken, and in the direction of "*the isles*" of prophecy and the uttermost ends of the earth, (Isa. 60: 9.) ¶ *Cyprus*. They embarked on board one of the many vessels which sailed in the summer season between Seleucia and Salamis. It was every way a natural course, as Barnabas was a native of this island, (ch. 4: 36,) and some of the men who had first preached the Gospel at Antioch were "men of Cyprus," (ch. 11: 20.) Since "Andrew first found his own brother Simon, (John 1: 41,) and John his brother James, and brought them to Jesus, the ties of family relationship had not been without effect in the progress of the Gospel." "The undesigned coincidences of the narrative in every thing connected with Barnabas, are of themselves enough to show the perfect truthfulness of this history of the Acts."—*Blunt*.

5. *Salamis*. This was the nearest point of the island, and was a chief city, having many Jews and synagogues. This, therefore, is "the first spot in the great missionary field of the heathen world." It will be observed that they preached "to the Jew first." Even though they were sent especially to the Gentiles, yet it was not any more now to the Gentiles exclusively, than before to the Jews exclusively. Still they were under the original obligation of selecting first the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and aiming to bring in a community of believers who should constitute a

universal and united Church of Jews and Gentiles. It will be seen that they persisted in this course even after, at the other Antioch, in Pisidia, the Jews so utterly rejected the Gospel, as to lead them to say, "Lo we turn to the Gentiles," ch. 13: 46. It is plain that these first missionaries understood what many cavilers have not, that, according to the Gospel commission, while the Gentiles were to be admitted and gathered in, the Jews were not to be utterly cast off, Rom. 11. Besides, the Gentiles were to be reached through the proselytes and Hellenistic Jews, and the preaching could best be begun in the synagogues. And the preaching to the Jews now is to be regarded as a transition step in the new course of the Church's progress. ¶ *Their minister—their attendant and helper*. The term is used of the minister in the synagogue, who kept the rolls, and took them out, and locked them up. We infer that John, who was "*their minister*," was a helper in the common cares of their journey, while he may also have been a helper in ministering the word. See Luke 1: 2. Yet there is no hint here of any inferior order of the ministry. This John was John Mark, nephew of Barnabas and son of Mary from Jerusalem, (ch. 12: 12, 25.)

6. *Through the isle*. The island was one hundred and forty miles long, and Paphos was one hundred miles west of Salamis, and the chief city of the western district along the southern shore. It was celebrated as the seat of a great temple of Venus, where the most revolting worship of that goddess was practiced, and this island was fabled as being the place of her birth. ¶ *Sorcerer*—(Gr. Magus—*Magian*.) At this time, impostors from the East were abroad in all quarters, as at Ephesus, (ch. 19: 13,) taking advantage of the

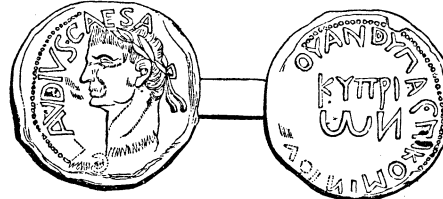
7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God.

8 But <sup>1</sup>Elymas the sorcerer, (for so is his name by interpretation,) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith.

prevalent expectation that some great personage would appear. This one was not a heathen Magus, but a Jew. For a long time, too, the Romans had looked to the East as the land of mystery, and "Syrian fortune-tellers flocked into all the haunts of public amusement." See ch. 8: 9. ¶ *False prophet*. He dealt in fortune-telling and prophesying, which would be in direct opposition to the prophets and teachers of the word. So always, in every special advance of the kingdom of light, has the kingdom of darkness rallied in opposition and deception, from the time of Moses, when "the magicians did so with their enchantments," (Exod. 7: 11.) So Simon Magus against Philip, (ch. 8: 9.)

¶ *Bar-jesus*—"son of Joshua" or Jesus, a common name. *Bar* is a Syriac term, meaning *son*. This man was the Jewish specimen, who perhaps is to show here, at the threshold, how the Jews will receive the Gospel from these missionaries.

7. *Was with*. An attendant of his, and in his service. ¶ *The deputy*. The term here is peculiar, and means *proconsul*. It was for a long time thought that there was an error in the history here, as this was not the common title of the governor. But a passage was at length discovered in Dio Cassius, showing that Augustus gave up Cyprus for certain reasons to be governed by this very style of officer, ἀνθυπατος. And since that, coins have been found



bearing this very title which is here used by Luke, and these coins were struck in the reign of Claudius, when Paul visited the island. ¶ *Sergius Paulus*. "Saul" bears the name of "Paul" from this time. Some suppose it to have been on occasion of this remarkable conversion where the Gentile Paulus receives the Gospel, while the Jew Elymas rejects it—and that this event was thus signalized because these were to be understood as representative men—and these specimen cases, at the threshold of his work, were to signify to Paul the different reception which the Gospel should meet with from Jew and Gentile at his hands. See vs. 9, note. ¶ *Prudent*—intelli-

gent, or discerning—as appears from the narrative. ¶ *Who* (Sergius Paulus,) called for—summoned, called to them—and desired earnestly to hear the word of God: the Gospel which claimed to be this revelation from God.

8. *But Elymas the sorcerer*—the Magus: The term *Elymas* is Arabic, and means the same as Magus in Greek—wise—one claiming extraordinary (supernatural) wisdom—occult science, vs. 6. ¶ *Withstood*—opposed—set himself in opposition. ¶ *Seeking*. This was his aim and object. ¶ *To turn away*. To *wrest* or *pervert*—a strong term—to turn off entirely from the faith, from believing, or giving in to the doctrines preached, "the hidden wisdom which



m ch. 4 : 8.

9 Then Saul, (who also *is called* Paul,) <sup>m</sup>filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him,

n Matt. 13 : 38.  
John 8 : 44.  
1 John 3 : 8.

10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, <sup>n</sup>*thou* child of the devil, *thou* enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?

o Exod. 9 : 3.  
Sam. 5 : 6.

11 And now, behold, <sup>o</sup>the hand of the Lord *is* upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season.

God ordained before the world unto our glory."

9. *Who also is called Paul.* Literally, *The also (called) Paul.* The Holy Spirit, just at this point in the history, gives *Saul* this name "*Paul*," which He invariably uses in the record from this time to the close. He may have been so "called" on this occasion, (John 1 : 42,) according to the practice of giving a new name to eminent servants of God, to mark their entering upon some new covenant relation—as Abraham, Sarah, Israel, under the Old Testament, and Boanerges and Peter, under the New Testament. And as these names were significant, and had reference to some prominent fact or feature of the occasion—as "*Boanerges*" referred to James and John asking to command fire from heaven, (Luke 9 : 54,) and "*Peter*" referred to the foundation-truth of his confession, (Matt. 16 : 16,) so here the name "*Paul*" might naturally be a memorial name, and have reference to the remarkable conversion of "*Paulus*," especially as it was a representative case. See vs. 7, note. We may even suppose that Paul had this name as his Gentile name, (which was the common practice,) in addition to his Jewish name Saul. This would not interfere with our theory of the Holy Ghost's intent in the record. The supposition that Paul assumed now his Gentile name, as being more appropriate to his field of labor among the Gentiles, would not be quite satisfactory. That Luke for the same reason gives him this name in the subsequent history, would not conflict with the view we have given; as it was under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. ¶ *Filled with the Holy Ghost.* Acting, therefore, under immediate

Divine inspiration, by which he was able to detect the wickedness, and authorized to pronounce the curse. It was no private bitterness, but the judgment of God. ¶ *Set his eyes—gazing intently upon him.* Some suppose this term has reference to Paul's weakness of eyes, ever since he was miraculously blinded for his unbelief—but this is conjecture.

10. Paul denounces him as *full* (not of the Holy Ghost, but) *of all deceit and all wickedness.* The latter term expresses "the cunning of a successful impostor." ¶ *Child. Son of the Devil*—instead of *Bar-jesus*, (son of Joshua or Jesus,) as his name was. The phrase means, one who has in him the nature and qualities of the devil, in an eminent degree. ¶ *Enemy of all righteousness,* and therefore, of course, the enemy of the Gospel, which is "the righteousness of God, &c." (Rom. 3 : 22.) ¶ *Pervert.* The same term as used vs. 8, rendered "to turn away," and means distorting, *wresting.* See note, vs. 18. ¶ *Right ways.* The way of life and the way of God's providence and grace. Wilt thou not cease to "turn the truth of God into a lie," and to "turn away the proconsul from the faith," or reception of the Gospel? See the similar case of Simon Magus at Samaria, (ch. 8 : 18.) OBSERVE.—None are so blind to the truth as they who are in the habit of deceiving others.

11. The Apostle here denounces upon him the Divine judgment—giving him *a sign* in the very experience of the punishment. Now he "knows good and evil," like our first parents, by the bitter sense of good lost and evil felt. ¶ *Blind, and not (even) seeing the sun* (so entirely blind,) *for a season,* (literally, *until a time or season.*)

And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.

12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

13 Now when Paul and his company loosed from Paphos, they came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departing <sup>p ch. 15:38.</sup> <sub>vs. 5.</sub> from them returned to Jerusalem.

This hints of a time when he should be restored; but a set time according to God's pleasure. It may be a hint of the Divine grace, to provoke his repentance. So Paul declares that blindness in part had happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, Rom. 11:25. Paul was himself so smitten for his unbelief, ch. 9:8, 9. ¶ *Mist and a darkness*—implying a gradual blinding—first a *dimness*, then a *darkness*. And going (groping) about, he sought guides, (literally, *hand-guides*.) This depicts to the life the manner of one suddenly struck with blindness. **OBSERVE.**—The Lord Jesus came, that they who see might be made blind, John 9:15.

12. The effect upon the proconsul of such a miraculous visitation was convincing. It followed so at once upon the sentence uttered by Paul, that it plainly indicated the Divine power, and it was blessed to the conversion of the proconsul. ¶ *Astonished*. He could not hesitate a moment between the teaching of the Magian, who was so miraculously put to blindness, and the teaching of the Lord, which was ac-

companied with such amazing tokens, and such astonishing power. **OBSERVE.**—(1) The miracle had no converting power, but “the doctrine,” accompanied by the Spirit of God. So (2) by the stumbling of Israel, salvation comes to the Gentiles, Rom. 11:11; 12:15. From Cyprus to Asia Minor, the missionaries now proceed.

13. *His company*. Literally, *they about Paul*, or accompanying him. **OBSERVE.**—Paul, now and henceforth appears as the leader and head of the mission. ¶ *Loosed*. Lit., *Having set sail*. ¶ *Perga*. Pamphylia was the province of Asia Minor adjacent to them on the west. Perga was its capital city, which was famous for the worship of the heathen goddess, Diana. Thus these missionaries advanced upon the strongholds of heathenism. ¶ *John departing*. This was “John Mark,” mentioned in vs. 5, as their attendant. The term here used, shows that his *departing* was on account of some dissatisfaction, for which Paul blames him, ch. 15:38. It may have been on account of Paul having now taken the lead, instead of Barnabas, Mark's un-



14 ¶ But when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia, and <sup>g</sup>went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down.

<sup>r</sup> Luke 4:16.  
vs. 27.

<sup>a</sup> Heb. 13:22.

<sup>t</sup> ch. 12:17.

<sup>u</sup> vs. 26:42, 43.  
ch. 10:35.

15 And <sup>r</sup>after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have <sup>a</sup>any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

16 Then Paul stood up, and <sup>t</sup>beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and <sup>u</sup>ye that fear God, give audience.

ele. Or, it may have been on account of the object of the mission becoming more clearly defined as a mission to the Gentiles, with which Mark had not, as yet, any lively sympathy. Or, with both these reasons, it may have been also from a reluctance to journey farther from his home at Jerusalem, and amidst the drudgeries and dangers of this western field. He afterwards joined Paul again in a tour to Cyprus; was "a comfort to him," Col. 4:10, 11, and "profitable to him for the ministry." 2 Tim. 4:11.

14 *They (themselves) departed.* Lit., *Having passed through (or journeyed on) from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia*, the adjacent province northward. They did not now tarry at Perga, probably because of the season, which made it desirable to take the trip into the interior without delay. The coast was infested by robbers. See 2 Cor. 11:26. The site of this Antioch has been found, now called *Jalobateh*. ¶ *Synagogue.* Through the religious assemblies of the Jews in their synagogues they could have access to the people most readily. ¶ *Sabbath—day of the Sabbath.* The Jewish Sabbath. ¶ *Sat down—*with the rest—though possibly in a conspicuous place, to draw attention to them, and invite an opportunity of speaking to the assembly. They were, at least, noticed. They were not seated in the place of the Rabbis, as they were sent to, as if at a remote point.

15. *The Law.* The five books of Moses, or the Pentateuch, were divided into sections for Sabbath reading, so as to complete the whole during the year. The Pentateuch was read in the synagogues from their earliest history.

¶ *The Prophets.* These were not at first read in the synagogues, nor until B. C. 163, when Antiochus Epiphanes prohibited the reading of the law, and these were substituted. Afterwards both were read. See Luke 4:16. See vs. 27. After the reading was done, the assembly was addressed by the reader, or by some other member, and strangers were often called upon, as our Lord, Luke 4:16. ¶ *The rulers.* Each synagogue was governed by a chief ruler, and a body of elders, like the teaching elder (or pastor) and ruling elders of the Christian Churches in the New Testament. ¶ *Sent unto them*, probably by "the minister," or servant who kept the rolls of Scriptures. ¶ *Men, brethren, if there is in you a word of exhortation (consolation) to (for) the people.* If you have in mind, or at heart to speak such word.

16. *Then Paul.* Though Barnabas was so called (see 4:36,) as "the son of consolation" (or *exhortation*, the same term as is used in the previous verse,) yet Paul is now and henceforth the speaker, as he has now formally entered upon his commission as "Apostle to the Gentiles." Barnabas, who knew of this commission, and took part in explaining it to the Apostles, (ch. 9:27,) and in accordance with it sent after Paul to Tarsus, to enter the field opened to him by the Spirit, at Antioch, (ch. 11:25,) could not object, but must have regarded it as every way proper and right. ¶ *Beckoning.* See ch. 12:16. ¶ *Men of Israel, &c.* He addresses himself not only to the native Jews, but to the *devout men*, fearers of God, such as Cornelius, who, though Gentiles, were yet brought under the influence of the

17 The God of this people of Israel <sup>z</sup> chose our fathers, and exalted the people <sup>y</sup> when they dwelt as strangers in the land of Egypt, <sup>x</sup> and with an high arm brought he them out of it.

18 And <sup>a</sup> about the time of forty years <sup>†</sup> suffered he their manners in the wilderness.

19 And when <sup>b</sup> he had destroyed seven nations in the land of Chanaan, <sup>c</sup> he divided their land to them by lot.

20 And after that <sup>d</sup> he gave *unto them* judges about the space of four hundred and fifty years, <sup>e</sup> until Samuel the prophet.

<sup>z</sup> Deut. 7:6, 7.  
<sup>y</sup> Ex. 1:1.  
<sup>x</sup> Ps. 105:27, 28.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. 7:17.  
<sup>b</sup> Ex. 6:6, and 13:14, 16.  
<sup>c</sup> Ex. 16:35.  
<sup>d</sup> Num. 14:33, 34.  
<sup>e</sup> Ps. 95:9, 10.  
<sup>†</sup> ch. 7:36.  
<sup>†</sup> Gr.  
ετρουπο—ν,  
perhaps for  
ετροφο—ν,  
bore, or fed  
them as a nurse  
beareth, or feed-  
eth her child.  
Deut. 1:31.  
<sup>b</sup> Deut. 7:1.  
<sup>c</sup> Josh. 14:1, 2.  
<sup>d</sup> Ps. 78:55.  
<sup>e</sup> Judges 2:16.  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 3:20.

Jewish religion, and were to be found in the synagogues at public worship. These were a means of access to the Gentile world. These were such, commonly, as had not made a special profession, and were not circumcised. They had seats in a separate part of the synagogue. **Observe.**—This discourse of Paul, the first which he delivered under his commission to the Gentiles, sets forth (1) God's covenant mercies to Israel, crowned by the fulfillment of His gracious promises to send a Saviour, (vss. 17–25.) (2) His rejection by the Jews and His resurrection by God, the Father, as abundantly proved, vss. 26–37. (3) The special application of these truths to them, with an earnest appeal for their reception of the Gospel as the only hope for salvation, vss. 38–42.

17. Paul shows that his Christian faith is in perfect keeping with a knowledge and acknowledgment of all God's peculiar mercies to Israel; for Christianity, (as he elsewhere shows in his Epistles,) is only the substance of which the Old Testament economy was the shadow. **¶ Chose—elected**, as Abraham from the land of idolaters. **¶ Our fathers**, he says, (mine as well as yours,) embracing all present, Jews and Gentiles, and thus he hints at the doctrine which he afterwards insists upon, that all true believers in Christ are the children of Abraham. Rom. 2:29. **¶ Exalted**. Literally, *Lifted them up*—from their depression under Egyptian bondage, making them prosperous, numerous and powerful. Some under-

stand it, brought up to manhood, Isa. 1:2. **¶ With an high arm**, in exertion of His almighty power, as in the plagues visited upon Pharaoh, and all the miracles for their release, Psalm 89:13.

18. *Suffered*. Rather, the term is more probably, *nurtured*—tended them as a nurse. See Deut. 1:31. There is a difference in the reading, but either term gives a good and scriptural sense.

19. From the Exodus he passes to the wilderness journey, and thence rapidly to the entrance into Canaan—glances at the heads of the history. **¶ Seven nations**. See Deut. 7:1; Josh. 3:10. The Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Girgashites, Jebusites, Hivites, Perizzites. **¶ Divided**. Rather, *Gave as an inheritance*. **¶ Their land**. It was made theirs by covenant before they entered on its possession. **Observe.**—God's distinguishing goodness to Israel, “giving people for their life,” (Isa. 43:4.)

20. *After these things*—the possession of Canaan. **¶ About**. Lit., *after these things, as (about) four hundred and fifty years*, which may mean, that after these things, which lasted about four hundred and fifty years, He gave them judges. It was about this length of time from the call of Abraham to the occupation of Canaan. Some ancient readings connect the time with the former clause, and make it relate to the possession of Canaan—“and from the call of Abraham to the occupation of the land was four hundred and fifty years.” The time is given in round

f 1 Sam. 8:5,  
and 10:1.  
g 1 Sam. 15:23,  
26, 28, and 16:1.  
h Hos. 13:11.  
i 1 Sam. 16:13.  
k 2 Sam. 2:4, and  
6:3.  
l Ps. 89:20.  
m 1 Sam. 13:14.  
n ch. 7:46.  
o Isa. 11:1.  
p Luke 1:32, 69.  
q ch. 2:30.  
r Rom. 1:3.  
s 2 Sam. 7:12.  
t Ps. 132:11.  
u Matt. 1:21.  
v Rom. 11:26.  
w Matt. 5:1.  
x Luke 3:3.  
y Matt. 3:11.  
z Mark 1:7.  
aa Luke 3:16.  
ab John 1:20, 27.

21 'And afterward they desired a king: and God gave unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty years.

22 And \*when he had removed him, \*he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, \*a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfill all my will.

23 'Of this man's seed hath God according <sup>m</sup> to his promise raised unto Israel <sup>a</sup> a Saviour, Jesus:

24 • When John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.

25 And as John fulfilled his course, he said, <sup>p</sup> Whom

numbers, "about." Josephus has the same calculation, making four hundred and forty-three years for the judges, including Samuel. This differs from the calculation in 1 Kings 6:1, but counting from Othniel to the death of Eli, we have three hundred and thirty-nine years, and then including their separate servitudes, one hundred and eleven years, we have four hundred and fifty years exactly. It is clear that Paul followed a chronology current among the Jews, and agreeing with the Book of Judges itself, and that adopted by Josephus. ¶ *Until Samuel.* Samuel is here named as closing the series of judges, and also as "the prophet" who anointed their first king. "The judges" were persons specially raised up by God for great emergencies, to govern and deliver the people. Under Samuel the prophetic office and order was established, as an offset to the kingly office.

21. *Afterward.* Lit., *thence*, from that point in the history—they desired—they asked for themselves. ¶ *Gave unto them*—just as truly as He "gave" the judges, (vs. 20,) yet in anger, Hos. 13:11.) ¶ *Saul.* Paul was also a Saul of the tribe of Benjamin. ¶ *Cis*—*Kish*, in Hebrew. ¶ *Forty years.* This term of his reign is not mentioned in the Old Testament. Josephus, however, gives the same.—*Ant.* vi., 14, 9.

22. *Removed.* 1 Sam. 31. He was removed by death, as a judgment for his disobedience. ¶ *Raised up.* This refers to the actual accession of David,

including his selection and anointing in Saul's lifetime. He did not take the throne till after Saul's death, 1 Sam. 16:12. ¶ *Testimony.* See 1 Sam. 13:14; Ps. 89:20; 78:70-72, where this testimony is found to be the substance of several passages—a summary given purposely instead of the entire texts. ¶ *A man.* Distinguished from Saul, as, in his kingly office, a man of God's own choice, and obedient to His express directions.

23. *Seed.* The promise to David was that he should always have a son to sit upon his throne. This was fulfilled in Jesus, who was of the seed of David—the son of David. The Jews were then looking for the fulfillment of this promise. ¶ *Raised unto Israel.* So the angels sang to the shepherds, "unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord." The name Jesus means "Saviour," Matt. 1:21.

24. *When John.* Paul, in his brief recapitulation, notes the leading facts—and here glances at John's office in heralding Christ according to the prophecy of Malachi, that "*Elias* should first come," (Mal 4:5, 6,) and turn the hearts, &c. So he preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, calling them all to repent and to signify and profess their repentance by being baptized. ¶ *Before His coming.* Literally, *entrance*—publicly upon His work.

25. *Fulfilled.* Was about fulfilling, or finishing his course as Christ's forerunner—near its close. It was just

think ye that I am? I am not *he*. But, behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of *his* feet I am not worthy to loose.

26 Men *and* brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, *to you* is the word of this salvation sent.

27 For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, *because* they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets *which* are read every Sabbath day, *they* have fulfilled *them* in condemning *him*.

28 *And* though they found no cause of death *in him*, *yet* desired they Pilate that he should be slain.

29 *And* when they had fulfilled all that was written of him, *they* took *him* down from the tree, and laid *him* in a sepulchre.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *John* 19: 6.  
*Luke* 24: 47.  
 vs. 46.  
 ch. 3: 26.  
<sup>r</sup> *Luke* 23: 34.  
 ch. 3: 17.  
 1 *Cor.* 2: 8.  
 vs. 14, 15.  
 ch. 15: 21.  
<sup>t</sup> *Luke* 24: 20, 44.  
 ch. 26: 22, and  
 28: 23.  
<sup>u</sup> *Matt.* 27: 22.  
*Mark* 15: 13, 14.  
*Luke* 23: 21, 22.  
*John* 19: 6-15.  
<sup>z</sup> ch. 3: 13, 14.  
<sup>y</sup> *Luke* 18: 31,  
 and 24: 44.  
*John* 19: 28, 30  
 26, 37.  
<sup>z</sup> *Matt.* 27: 50.  
*Mark* 15: 46.  
*Luke* 23: 53.  
*John* 19: 38.  
 o *Isa.* 53.  
 Dan. 9: 26.  
 Ps. 22: 16.  
 Zech. 12: 10.

before his imprisonment; and Christ's public, formal ministry commenced as John's ceased. The Jews acknowledged John as a prophet, and were therefore bound to admit his testimony. ¶ *Whom*. See *John* 1: 19-28. ¶ *I am not*. This was his reply to their questioning. And here the idea is that given by John, "I am not"—the one who should come—"the comer" predicted, *John* 1: 20. ¶ *But*. See *Notes on Matt.* 3: 11.

26. Paul now declares to them their personal and special interest in the matter. This Gospel—the word (or doctrine,) of this salvation, is sent to you, Jews and Gentiles. This is "the glad tidings" which Paul preaches, (vs. 32.) It was sent "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile." ¶ *Sent*. Was sent forth from the beginning, and always intended to go abroad to all people, but especially, and first of all, to "the stock of Abraham." See ch. 3: 26: "Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, hath sent Him to bless you," &c.

27. *For*. This statement of facts is brought forward as the proof that Jesus was the promised Messiah, for in Him the prophecies had been fulfilled. He also shows the part which the Jewish people, even the rulers, (Sanhedrim,) had taken in his death. ¶ *Because*. Literally, *having been ignorant of this one*—Jesus. "For had they

known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," (1 *Cor.* 2: 8.) They ought to have known Him (however,) as He was clearly set forth in their own prophetic Scriptures. Hence this ignorance was no excuse. It was rather an aggravation of their crime. ¶ *The voices*. They were ignorant of the true sense of their own prophets, whose voices (words) were read every Sabbath day, (in their synagogues,) they have fulfilled them in condemning Him. Literally, *condemning (Him) they have fulfilled (them.)* The reading of the Prophets as well as the Law, was the practice of the synagogues since the time of the Maccabees, or about one hundred years before Christ's coming, as if it had been so ordered in God's providence to give them warning of His speedy advent. See vs. 15. See *Matt.* 17: 12.

28. *Though*. Literally, *having found (upon trial,) no cause of death*—(lawful accusation of death—legal charge of capital crime,) they desired, (asked for themselves, see vs. 21; ch. 3: 13,) in the sense, however, of *demanding*. See the history, *John* 19: 15. ¶ *Slain*—destroyed—made away with. Away with Him—crucify Him.

29-30. *And when they had fulfilled (brought to an end—consummated,) all the things which were written concerning Him, they took Him down*. Paul brings together in the narrative what

<sup>a</sup> Matt. 28: 6.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 2: 24, and 3:  
 13, 15, 26, and  
 5: 30.  
<sup>c</sup> Matt. 28: 16.  
 ch. 1: 3.  
<sup>d</sup> Cor. 15: 5, 6, 7.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. 1: 11.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 1: 8, and  
 2: 32, and 3: 15,  
 and 5: 32.  
<sup>g</sup> Gen. 3: 15, and  
 12: 3, and 22: 18.  
 ch. 26: 6.  
 Rom. 4: 13.  
 Gal. 3: 16.  
<sup>h</sup> Ps. 2: 7.  
 Heb. 1: 5, and  
 5: 5.

30 <sup>b</sup> But God raised him from the dead:

31 And <sup>c</sup> he was seen many days of them which came up with him <sup>d</sup> from Galilee to Jerusalem, <sup>e</sup> who are his witnesses unto the people.

32 And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that <sup>f</sup> the promise which was made unto the fathers,

33 God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, <sup>g</sup> Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

34 And as concerning that he raised him up from the

friends and foes together did, without stopping to make the distinction, else he refers here to the sealing of the sepulchre by His enemies. His object is simply to give the leading events, so as to reach the conclusion of the matter. ¶ *But.* This is the vital point—the grand conclusive proof of His Messiahship. Though men crucified Him, and sealed the sepulchre to keep Him there, “*God raised Him from the dead*”—from (from among,) the dead.

31. *Was seen.* Here are the further facts which clearly proved His resurrection. These facts are those upon which the Christian Church has always based its belief—facts abundantly proven—not mere theories, nor idle rumors. ¶ *Many days.* During forty days from the days after the Pentecost until the Passover, Luke 4: 25; 18: 4. ¶ *By those.* He was seen by such as had been much in His company, all the way “from Galilee to Jerusalem,” and they could not be mistaken. ¶ *His witnesses.* He appeals to these persons who had seen Him. They were yet living when Paul spoke. ¶ *Unto the people.* This was not mere private testimony, and out of reach, at second-hand; but public and official, and addressed to the people of Israel.

32, 33. *We declare.* We, Paul and Barnabas, (on the basis of these facts, so fully attested,) declare unto you, &c., literally, *we evangelize to you*, (preach to you as the *evangel*, or glad tidings,) *the promise made to the fathers*—the promise of Christ made to Abraham, and repeated to the fathers, Gal. 3: 14–22,

that this (promise) God hath fulfilled to their children, to us, having raised up Jesus again (from the dead, vs. 34.) The great promise of the Messiah, which is found every where in the Old Testament, God had fulfilled to the Jews of that day, the descendants of the patriarchs, in that He raised up Jesus again, (the noun of this verb means the resurrection,) and thus proved Him to be the very Messiah long promised. He was “declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead.” Rom. 1: 4. ¶ *Second Psalm.* This passage in the second Psalm is quoted as referring to the Messiah, and showing the Sonship of Christ, not only from His Divine nature, but from the Divine power, bearing testimony to His claim. His resurrection is the crowning proof of His Messiahship. It was, therefore, that great fact which the Apostles were raised up to testify and proclaim, (ch. 1: 22.) In vss. 30 and 31, the Apostle urges the vital point of the resurrection, and then vss. 32 and 33 makes this fact the basis of the glad tidings, as it is the crowning fulfillment of the promises to the fathers respecting the Messiah. This event also fulfills the passage in the second Psalm. In vs. 34, he shows this event to be also a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 55: 3. See 1 Peter 1: 3. Christ was said by the Father to be begotten at the resurrection, as He was then, as God-man, raised up from all the power of death to an endless life.

34. *As concerning.* Here he evidently dwells further upon this vital

dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, <sup>a</sup>I will give you the sure <sup>†</sup>mercies of David.

35 Wherefore he saith also in another *psalm*, <sup>1</sup>Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

36 For David, || after he had served his own generation by the will of God, <sup>\*</sup>fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption:

37 But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

<sup>a</sup> Isa. 54:3.  
<sup>†</sup> Gr. τὰ ἁγία,  
 Holy, or, just  
 things: which  
 word the LXX,  
 both in the  
 place of *Isa.* 55:  
 3, and in many  
 others, used for  
 that which is in  
 the Hebrew,  
 mercies.  
<sup>1</sup> Ps. 16:10.  
 ch. 2:31.  
 || Or, after he  
 had in his own  
 age served the  
 will of God.  
<sup>\*</sup> vs. 22.  
 Ps. 78:72.  
 & 1 Kings 2:10.

matter of the resurrection as permanent, and he shows how it had been predicted and promised in the language of Isaiah, promising to David a son to sit upon his throne forever, (Christ,) as the *sure* (faithful and holy) *mercies of David*, or the *holy promises to David which are sure of accomplishment*. ¶ *No more*. It was a resurrection that would be *forever*, and put him forever out of the reach of death and its consequent corruption. Paul to the Hebrews dwells on this—"Thou art a Priest FOREVER." Heb. 7:17, 25; Ps. 110:4. "HE EVER LIVETH." This crowns our hope for eternity. ¶ *On this wise—thus*. See 2 Samuel 7:8-16.

35. *Wherefore also*—according to which pledge of Christ's endless life. Here Paul refers, on this point of Christ's living forever, to another promise referring to the Messiah—that He should not be left to see corruption in the grave. So in the Hebrews, he shows that as a High Priest, He was appointed not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. (Heb. 7:16.) See also Peter's similar use of this passage to show that it could not refer to David and must refer to Christ. Ch. 2:25-31. See *Notes*. ¶ *In another Psalm*. (Ps. 16:10.) The exact agreement of Peter and Paul in their exposition of this passage, though in different circumstances and connections, is accounted for by their plenary inspiration. The Jews admitted that all these Old Testament prophecies related to the Messiah, until after Christ *came*, and then, when they were used

21\*

by Christians against them, they sought to apply them to others than Christ.

36. *For*. This passage refers not to David, but to Jesus. ¶ *Served*. *David served his own generation* (in which he lived,) and no farther, because he was arrested by death. ¶ *By the will of God*. He accomplished for his own generation (to which he belonged, and to which he was confined by his mortality,) his allotted work; his work, as prescribed by God; and then (because he was not above the power of death and the grave,) *he fell asleep*. See ch. 7:60. See 1 Kings 2:10. The death of the good is thus spoken of in both Testaments. ¶ *Was laid*. Literally, *was added unto his fathers*—according to the Old Testament expression, "was gathered to his fathers." This phrase in the Old Testament plainly recognizes the existence of the soul in a future state. Even Gesenius in his Lexicon, shows that it is distinguished from death and burial, as in Gen. 25:8, &c. It is used without respect to burial in the same vault, and evidently refers to something beyond the sameness of locality in the grave. ¶ *Saw corruption*. While his soul was gathered to his fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, his body *saw* (experienced) *corruption*—underwent the common decay and putrefaction of the grave. This fact (and Peter has added, "his grave is with us to this day,") proves that the prophecy was not fulfilled in David, but looked forward to a greater than he. See ch. 2:29.

37. *But He*. This Jesus, who *was* thus raised up from the dead, (vs. 32,



Jer. 31: 34.  
Dan. 9: 24.  
Luke 24: 47.  
1 John 2: 12.  
m. Isa. 53: 11.  
Rom. 3: 28, and  
8: 3.  
Heb. 7: 19.

38 ¶ Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that <sup>1</sup>through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins:

39 And <sup>m</sup>by him all that believe are justified from *all* things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

40 Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in <sup>n</sup>the prophets;

34,) was reserved from the power of the grave, and *saw no corruption*—did not undergo the process of decay in the grave, but before coming under its power He was raised up.

38. *Be it known.* Paul here applies these Gospel facts to his hearers, and shows them the personal interest they have in the person and work of Christ. He preaches to them the free forgiveness of sins *through* (by means of) *this one*—Jesus. ¶ *Is preached—is announced*, (as a message.) Free forgiveness in His name—by virtue of His mediatorial work—who was crucified at Jerusalem and raised from the dead—the promised Messiah. ¶ *The forgiveness.* This they should have been led to expect from their Old Testament Scriptures, Isa. 55; Ezek. 18; Zech. 3: 4. Thus these facts were of the highest practical moment to them.

39. *By Him.* Literally, *and from all things from which ye were not able to be justified by the law of Moses, every one who believes is justified.* The reading is not “from all the things from which ye could not, &c.,” as though it was only a certain class of offenses, such as the law of Moses could not reach, from the guilt of which Christ could give justification; but *in* (through, by) Him, (by virtue of His work, and by union with Him,) every one who believes is justified *from all things*, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. It proclaims the entire justification from every sin, which is brought by Jesus Christ; and declares that the Mosaic law could not justify from all things—that is (according to the Greek idiom,) could not justify from any thing. “For it is not possible,” as Paul says in the He-

brews, “that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sins,” Heb. 10: 4. This is also the great doctrine of Paul’s epistle to the Romans and to the Galatians. “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, (that is, on account of our fallen nature, and not by any defects of its own,) God sending His own Son, &c.” Rom. 8: 3; Gal. 3: 11. OBSERVE.—(1) Sin is not only forgiven by Christ, but justification is secured to us, by which we are accounted righteous. (2) The law cannot justify, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1: 7.

40. *Beware.* Literally, *See to it.* This message of salvation implies destruction to those who reject or neglect it. These are the two halves of Christ’s ministry—to believers, salvation—to unbelievers, their own chosen destruction. Here, therefore, He gives the warning. ¶ *Therefore.* Because Christ is such a Saviour from sin and death, beware, for “how shall ye escape if ye neglect so great salvation, &c.” The grace brought to us in the Gospel, makes the perdition of despisers more severe. This warning had been *spoken of in the prophets*—in the book of the prophets—in the prophetic portion of the sacred Scriptures. It had been uttered by the prophet Habakkuk (1: 5,) as a prediction of the judgments which were to come upon their nation in the destruction of their temple, about twenty years before the Babylonish captivity. And now Paul repeats it as about to be fulfilled again and more fully, in the destruction of their temple by the Romans, after about twenty-five years. In the prophecy as uttered by Habakkuk, the

41 Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.

42 And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them † the next sabbath.

43 Now when the congregation was broken up, many of the Jews and religious proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas: who, speaking to them, ° persuaded them to continue in ² the grace of God.

† Gr. in the week between, or, in the sabbath between.  
o ch. 11: 23, and 14: 22.  
p Tit. 2: 11.  
Heb. 12: 15.  
1 Pet. 5: 12.

doctrine had first been stated as here.  
“*The just shall live by faith.*”

41. *Behold, &c.* This does not precisely follow the language of the prophet, but refers to it and gives the purport of it, as substantially applicable to their case. It is only a repeated fulfillment of the prophecy, according to the analogy of God's dealings in different ages, going on to be more and more fully verified, as it draws nearer to that full and final accomplishment of all the promises and threatenings by which every prophetic word shall be exhausted. See *Alford*. ¶ *Despisers*. Paul uses here the Greek version, with which they were familiar, because it sufficiently suited his purpose, and he spake under the Divine inspiration authorizing the use of it in these terms. ¶ *Wonder*. Be amazed at the destruction with which God suddenly visits His enemies. ¶ *Perish*. Be overwhelmed with the swift coming punishment. ¶ *For I work a work* (of summary vengeance,) *in your days—a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though one declare it unto you*. They would not believe in the coming desolation, though it should be so plainly and personally told them. So our Lord declares, “As in the days of Noah, &c.” Matt. 24: 38.

42. The effect of Paul's discourse is here stated. It was another specimen case. As with Sergius Paulus and Elymas at Paphos, the Jew rejects, and the Gentile receives the salvation. Even if, according to late critics, the terms “Jews and Gentiles,” are to be

omitted in this verse, this is still the result, as appears from the following verses. The Gentiles were Gentile proselytes. ¶ *They besought that these words* (these doctrines,) *might be preached unto them the next Sabbath*. The doctrine of faith in Christ, as the way of salvation, would put the Gentiles on a footing with the Jews, and would thus naturally interest them in having it repeated. ¶ *Next*. Literally, *between*—and by some understood as *between the Sabbaths*, or intervening days of worship. But the usage of the Greek authorizes the sense of our version. See vs. 44. **OBSERVE.**—When the Gospel takes any proper hold upon the heart, there is a desire awakened for its repetition. How pleasant to Christian ministers to be entreated to preach the Gospel again and again.

43. *The congregation*. Literally, *when the synagogue was broken up*. The former verse may read, “and when they (Paul and Barnabas,) were going out, &c., they (the congregation) besought them, &c.” This verse would then refer to a further step in the history. *Many*, both of the Jews and of the Gentile proselytes, showed their earnest interest in their teaching by following them on their way from the synagogue. ¶ *Who* (Paul and Barnabas,) *speaking to them, persuaded them to continue* (to, abide—*continue steadfastly*,) *in the grace of God—to hold fast to the Gospel of grace which they had heard and received with joy; and not be moved by the derisions of the opposing Jews*.

44 ¶ And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the word of God.

45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and <sup>spake</sup> against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, <sup>It</sup> was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you : but <sup>seeing</sup> ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, <sup>we</sup> turn to the Gentiles.

g ch. 18 : 6.  
f Pet. 4 : 4.  
Jude 10.  
r Matt. 10 : 6.  
ch. 3 : 26.  
vs. 26  
Rom. 1 : 16.  
g Ex. 32 : 10.  
Deut. 32 : 21.  
Isa. 55 : 5.  
Matt. 21 : 43.  
Rom. 10 : 19.  
g ch. 18 : 6, and  
- 28 : 28.

44. *The next Sabbath.* According to the request in vs. 42, Paul and Barnabas consented to preach to them again, and the result was wonderful. The great mass of the population was moved, and convened in the synagogue and around it, both Jews and Gentile proselytes—to hear the word of God—the Gospel message, as already preached to them. *OBSERVE.*—The simplicity of the Apostles' preaching. They narrated the story of the cross—expounded the prophecies in the light of the Gospel history, and pressed upon the hearers their momentous and personal interest in the matter.

45. *The multitudes.* It was the sight of the Gentiles crowding to *their* house of prayer to receive this Gospel, which offended the Jews. They said that the effect must be to put the Gentiles on a level with them, and lose to them their ancient prerogative as the chosen people of God. See Rom. 11. ¶ *Envy*—*emulation*—party feeling. Their Jewish pride was wounded, that the Gentiles were admitted to an equality with themselves, and that they were eagerly availing themselves of the privilege. So it had been predicted : “I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no (covenant) people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you,” Hos. 2 : 23 ; Rom. 10 : 19. ¶ *Spake against*—*contradicted*. They disputed this interpretation and application of their Scriptures, if not the facts themselves. And this they did in a spirit of wicked opposition—contradicting not *only*, but also *blaspheming*—reviling

Paul and Barnabas, and profanely denying Christ as the Messiah.

46. *Waxed bold.* Rather, *Speaking out freely, said*. The effect of this decided rejection of the Gospel by the Jews was to give it more fully to the Gentiles. “The fall of them is the riches of the world,” Rom. 10 : 17–21 ; 11 : 12. “*It was necessary,*” (according to the Divine plan and direction, Luke 24 : 47.) The terms are more forcibly arranged in the Greek—“*Unto you it was necessary that the word of God first be spoken, but seeing (since) you thrust it away from you, and judge (sentence) yourselves (as) not worthy of the eternal life.*” They, by their conduct, passed sentence upon themselves, as unfit to have the eternal life offered in the Gospel. Sinners who reject Christ, cut themselves off from His salvation. If any man love not so lovely a being as the Lord Jesus Christ, he makes himself anathema—condemns and curses himself—denies to himself the only hope of life eternal, and Eternal Justice can only say, let him be anathema! ¶ *Lo we turn.* This is their open, formal advertisement, that because of the Jews having openly rejected the offered salvation, they (in accordance with their commission) *were turning*—would now turn to the Gentiles, yet not so as to finally abandon the Jews. They were charged to preach to *the Jew* first, but this only on their way to the Gentiles, (lit., *the nations*.) to whom they were expressly commissioned, while they would yet repeat the Gospel

47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*, <sup>u Isa. 42:6, and 49:6.</sup> *I* have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. <sup>Luke 2:32.</sup>

48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord: <sup>z ch. 2:47.</sup> and as many as were <sup>Rom. 8:29.</sup> <sup>Eph. 1:5.</sup> ordained to eternal life believed.

49 And the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region.

50 But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women,

to the Jews elsewhere. A new "Israel" and the true *Israel*, succeeded to the former.

47. *For so—for such*—to this effect, is their Divine authority for going to the Gentiles, no matter though the Jews should rage. ¶ *Commanded.* Isa. 49:6. ¶ *I have set Thee*, (the Messiah, as Simeon applied the prophecy in the temple, Luke 23:32.) So Jesus said of Himself, "I am the light of the world," (John 8:12,) and He said also to His people, "Ye are the light of the world," (Matt. 5:14.) So in Isaiah, "the Servant of God" is to be understood of the whole body of Christ, the Head and the members. ¶ *A light of the Gentiles*, &c. This was the express call of Saul at his conversion, "For he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel," ch. 9:15. He was the Apostle of the Gentiles.

48. *Were glad.* The message was "glad tidings" to them, and to whomsoever the Gospel comes as glad tidings, to them it is "the Gospel," with all its benefits. ¶ *Glorified the word*—praised, put honor upon the Gospel message, in contrast with the Jews as a class, who "contradicted it with blasphemy." ¶ *And as many as were ordained to eternal life*—(not ordained themselves, nor disposed themselves, nor were inclined, but)—were *purposely and positively appointed unto eternal life*. The term means, *arranged, ordered, disposed*, (not in the sense of self-inclination, but of being ordained by a power from without.) Here the ordination is such as issues in their *believing*, and it must be the Divine or-

dination every where spoken of in Scripture. Believers are spoken of as "elect," they are "predestinated"—"foreordained." And it is clearly taught as a fact, however it be accounted for, that only such as are ordained to eternal life do believe. **OBSERVE.**—While the Jews adjudged themselves unworthy of the eternal life freely proclaimed in the Gospel, "as many as were ordained to eternal life," in God's eternal purpose and plan, believed. **OBSERVE.**—(1) This only accounts for *their* believing while others blasphemed. It was due solely to God's distinguishing grace, which chose them. (2) These were ordained to be believing and faithful men, and "to go and bring forth fruit," (John 15:16.) There is no plan for electing any man, except for electing him unto obedience, and faith, and holiness. (3) A man may inquire of himself about his election, by asking whether this salvation from sin, to which God's people are chosen, is going on within him—whether *Jesus*, who is Saviour, is Jesus (Saviour) to him in deed and in truth, saving him daily from sin. (4) It is no mere accident that any believe, or that some believe and others do not. It is the fruit of Divine love in the counsels of eternity, that any are led to embrace Christ.

49. *The word of the Lord*—as before, the Gospel of Christ—*was published—was conveyed*—circulated throughout all the region of Pisidia, in the neighborhood of Antioch. This was done by the converts as well as by Paul and Barnabas.

50. *The devout* (lit., *worshipping*—i. e., the Gentiles, who were, more or less, proselytes of the Jewish religion,) *and*

# 2 Tim. 3 : 11.

# Matt. 10 : 14.  
Mark 6 : 11.  
Luke 9 : 5.  
ch. 18 : 6.  
# Matt. 5 : 12.  
John 16 : 22.  
ch. 2 : 46.

and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.

51 <sup>a</sup> But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium.

52 And the disciples <sup>a</sup> were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.

*honorable*—those of genteel rank in the city. Women had much influence both for and against Christianity, ch. 16 : 14 ; 17 : 2 ; Phil. 4 : 3 ; 1 Cor. 7 : 16. Their prejudices were appealed to, and they were doubtless zealous for their new religion. ¶ *Chief men*. Literally, *First men*—of highest rank, of the same circle probably with the women just named. The men were gained more easily through the influence of the women, who were *stirred up*—*incited* by incendiary appeals. Thus they *raised a persecution*, and succeeded in exciting a fierce outbreak against Paul and Barnabas, and *expelled them*, (*put them out*,) thrust them out with more or less violence, *out of their coasts*—borders, confines. So the Jews had treated our Lord at Nazareth, (Luke 4 : 29.)

51. *Shook off*. This was according to our Lord's direction to the seventy, Matt. 10 : 14. It expressed the utter rejection of those who thus rejected the Gospel of Christ. They signified by this symbolical act the entire ridance they would have of such wicked rejecters of Christ, that they would own no fellowship with them, and would not allow even the dust of their city to remain on their feet. This expressed somewhat like washing the hands of a wicked deed, or shaking the raiment. ¶ *Against them*—for a testimony against them, Luke 9 : 5. ¶ *Iconium*. A famous city forty-five miles southeast of Antioch, at the foot of Mount Taurus, and the capital of Lycaonia, according to Strabo. It is now called *Koniyeh*, and has about thirty thousand inhabitants.

52. *The Disciples*—at Antioch, notwithstanding all this opposition of evil men and the consequent departure of their teachers, *were filled with joy* (by the special Divine energy,) *and with the Holy Ghost*, (*joy of, or joy in the Holy Ghost*,) supernatural elevation of mind;

and perhaps also with miraculous gifts.

NOTE.—(1) The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to them that are saved, it is the power of God. (2) The power of the Gospel often appeared in the early Church, filling the souls of the Disciples with triumphant and pious joy in the midst of adversities. (3) The communion of saints and of the Holy Ghost was more than a compensation for the loss of mere natural communion. (4) We find the Sabbath observance all along noted, as not abrogated, vs. 14, 42 ; ch. 13 : 27, 44 ; 16 : 13 ; 17 : 2 ; 18 : 4.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

This chapter continues the narrative of this first missionary journey, as extended into Asia Minor—their persecutions and flight from place to place, preaching the Gospel at Iconium, Lycaonia, Lystra, Derbe,—their return—organizing Churches where they had preached—and their arrival again at Antioch in Syria, with their report of their mission to the Church which sent them.

This report shows that as the result of this tour a farther step has been taken in the progress of the kingdom of Christ—a step which they designate as the **OPENING OF THE DOOR OF FAITH UNTO THE GENTILES by God**, vs. 27. Prior to this tour, the converts from the Gentiles had been chiefly proselytes to Judaism. But now the converts were for the most part from gross idolatry. The Jews still persecute the missionaries. At Lystra we shall see the first outbreak of the riotous persecutions from which they so much suffered in after times, and we shall note also their mode of argument with ignorant idolaters. All along is fulfilled our Lord's forewarning, **John** 16 : 2. See Rom. 9 : 3.

## CHAPTER XIV.

1 AND it came to pass in Iconium, that they went both together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spake, that a great multitude both of the Jews and also of the Greeks believed.

2 But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren.

3 Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, <sup>a</sup> which gave testimony unto the word of his <sup>a Mark 16:20. Heb. 2:4.</sup> grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

1. *Both together.* Though Paul was so prominent, they are mentioned as laboring together. Our Lord sent the seventy, *two and two*, and amidst such oppositions their joint testimony was needed. They were yet availing themselves of the Jewish synagogues for access to the people. ¶ *So spake.* Literally, *thus, so that.* In such a manner, as that this was the result. Not as though their speaking had any power in itself to convert the hearers, but this was the result which was also appropriate to their mode of preaching. They *so spake* the truth in Christ—the earnest conviction and feeling of their own souls, and the appeals and warnings of the Gospel—as *that* the fitting result was the believing of so many and of such. OBSERVE.—(1) Persecution bound these ministers together and increased their power. (2) Though God uses human means, He blesses only the truth; and only the earnest, faithful, fitting presentation of the truth in Christ can properly expect a blessing. (3) Yet God does not so bind Himself to the means, as always to give faithful ministers a number of converts in exact proportion to their faithfulness. (4) How often “*a great multitude*” are brought to salvation where no other means are used than have been long employed without any visible effect. John 3:8. ¶ *Greeks.* Though the Jews had reviled in Antioch of Pisidia, and would revile here also, yet this persevering and faithful preaching was blessed, and both Jews and Gentiles were gathered in. These were Gentiles, who may or may not

have been proselytes, since we know from the classics that the heathen (Greeks) attended the synagogues. OBSERVE.—What encouragement is here to perseverance in Christian duty, and especially in ministerial labors, having long patience for the blessing, if not in one place yet in another. See vs. 3. Jas. 5:7, 8.

2. *Unbelieving Jews.* These were vexed doubtless by the fact that so many of their own people believed. They *stirred up* (*excited and embittered*) the minds of the Gentiles. Literally, (*the nations*, not the same term as “Greeks,” in vs. 1.) The term “*made evil affected*,” means literally, *made bad, evil, hostile.* This they did, doubtless, by exciting their prejudices and misrepresenting the kingdom of Christ, as at Antioch with the Gentile women, ch. 13:50. This verse may be regarded as a parenthesis.

3. *Long time therefore.* *Long time accordingly.* This verse connects with vs. 1, or it may be understood as connecting with vs. 1 and 2. Because of this success, (vs. 1,) and this opposition, (vs. 2,) in all the circumstances—they *abode—spent* (*the time*), *speaking boldly—using freedom of speech*—not daunted by the opposition, and trusting in (*upon*) the Lord. It was their reliance on Christ, and their conscientious, earnest service of Him, as well as His miracles wrought by them, which gave them so much courage. ¶ *Which gave.* That is, *who* (the Lord Jesus Christ) testified (or gave testimony,) to the word of His grace—to His gracious message delivered by them. ¶ *And granted—rather*

**4** But the multitude of the city was divided : and part held with the Jews, and part with the <sup>b</sup>apostles.

**5** And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, <sup>c</sup>to use them despitefully, and to stone them,

**6** They were ware of *it*, and <sup>d</sup>fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about.

**er, granting**—by granting that *signs and wonders be done by their hands*. Thus the Lord testified by giving them the power, instrumentally, of working miracles. See Heb. 2:2, “God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders.” ¶ *Signs*. This is one of the four terms used commonly in the New Testament for miracles, which are *signs*, i. e. of the Divine presence. ¶ *Wonders—prodigies*. Such wondrous works as could not be wrought by human power.

**4. But the multitude.** The populace, who were Gentiles, *was divided*, (in a schism, as the term is,) *and some were with the Jews*, (who, as a class, were opposers) *and others with the Apostles*—that is, with the Apostles as a class, as much as to say, some took sides with the Jewish interest, and some with the Apostles. Though Barnabas is no where called an Apostle, they may be spoken of here together by this term in the sense of missionaries—persons sent, commissioned, as the term means. Our Lord himself in this sense is called “the Apostle of our profession.” Heb. 3:1.

**5. An assault.** Not an actual outbreak, as would seem, but a *determined attempt* or *impulse*, involving both Gentiles and Jews, in concert with the rulers of the Jews, who had taken such a leading part in the persecution and crucifixion of Christ—not here of course the Sanhedrim, but the rulers of the synagogues and elders of the people, consisting of the heads of families and elders, which the Jews always recognized according to their ancient constitution; or, as some suppose, the magistrates of the town, who were Roman officials, and whose business

it was rather to keep the peace; or most probably both Jewish and Gentile dignitaries. ¶ *To use them despitefully—to load them with insult, and to stone them*—as the ultimate intent of putting them out of the way. The Jews may have urged this as they accused the missionaries of blasphemy. Paul says, “*Once was I stoned*,” which is the instance at Lystra, recorded in vs. 19. Here he escaped, else it would have been *twice*.

**6. Ware of it.** This may mean *when they had considered it*, see ch. 12:12, or *when they understood it*—what was going on. ¶ *Fled*, as before, and according to the Divine direction. Christ said to His seventy missionaries, “If they persecute you in one city, flee to another”—(Matt. 10:23,)—so that their usefulness might not be needlessly cut short by an untimely death which could be avoided. ¶ *Lystra and Derbe. Unto the cities of Lycaonia, (viz.) Lystra and Derbe.* The former was probably twenty miles south of Iconium, and Derbe east of this about the same distance. Their exact sites are not positively identified. There are ruins of about forty Christian churches on the north side of the Black Mountain, at a place called by the Turks “the thousand and one churches,” which the most recent travelers take to be the site of one or other of these cities. The fugitive missionaries went not only to these two cities, but to their vicinities—“*the region that lieth round about.*” ¶ *And there—throughout that part of the province of Lycaonia, they preached the Gospel.* Literally, *they were evangelizing*—proclaiming the good news, occupying thus some length of time.

7 And there they preached the gospel.

8 ¶ And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent <sup>ch. 8:12</sup> in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked :

9 The same heard Paul speak ; who stedfastly beholding him, and 'perceiving that he had faith to be healed, <sup>f Matt. 8:10, and 9:28, 29. g Isa. 35:6.</sup>

10 Said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.

11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up

8. *At Lystra* the missionaries encountered the grossest superstitions and idolatries of the heathen. It was evidently a wild, uncultivated district, sitting in the region and, shadow of death. *A certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, sat* (probably in the forum or market-place, or temple-gate, ch. 3:1, as is still the custom at the East,) *a cripple from his mother's womb*; and to lay stress upon the fact that he was born so, and hence regarded as incurable—it is added, *who never walked*. OBSERVE.—The crippled and blind from birth, who were numerous at the East, were impressive pictures of our native depravity and disability. To heal such was confessed to be a Divine operation.

9. *The same*. Literally, *this one* (the cripple,) *was listening as Paul discoursed—who* (Paul) *gazing at him*, (fixing his eyes intently upon him,) see ch. 13:3, note—*seeing that he possesses faith of being healed*—that is, such faith as our Lord called for when he asked the blind man, Matt. 9:28, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" or Martha, "Believest thou this," John 11; or the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, "Wilt thou be made whole," (John 5:6,) and when He said, "According to thy faith be it unto thee." OBSERVE.—Our Lord never complained of men's excessive confidence or extravagant expectation, but only of their fearfulness and doubts, (Matt. 8:26.) And so His ministers, who are missionaries like Him to the wretched and lost, will not discourage any such confidence. He never betrays any trust reposed in Him, and whoever is seen to have a faith of being healed by Christ's power: and grace

as proclaimed in the Gospel, will surely find healing and salvation. The faith is already the gift of God. (Eph. 2:8.) Faith in Christ will show itself in the conduct. It *works*, &c. ¶ *Said with a loud voice*, above the tone in which he was before speaking, probably to call public attention to the miracle. These wondrous works were not done in a corner, like the tricks of jugglers, but were open, and invited attention and examination. ¶ *Stand upright*. Though the Apostle makes here no mention of the name of Christ as that by which the miracle was wrought, such a recognition is implied in the previous clause, where the faith of being healed was a faith in Christ, whom the missionaries preached as the only name by which healing could be given. ¶ *Upright—straight*. It was at once a perfect cure, and in this it was distinguished from all medical cures, which at best must be very slow and gradual. ¶ *Leaped and walked*. Literally, *sprang up and walked about* with a freedom, and in perfect use of his limbs. He who never had walked, *leaped*—springing up in a single leap, from his life-long disability, and walked about as if he never was crippled. Probably like the similar case at the temple gate, under Peter and John, he walked, and leaped, and praised God. OBSERVE.—It was probably on his first visit to Lystra that Timothy was converted, since on Paul's second visit, a year or two after, (ch. 16:1,) he found him already a Christian.

11. *The people*. *The crowds*, (the promiscuous multitude,) *seeing what Paul had done*, (healing the cripple) *lifted up their voice* (shouted out) *in Lycaonic*, (language,) which is sup-



<sup>3</sup> ch. 8:16, and <sup>28:6.</sup> their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, <sup>1</sup> The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.

<sup>4</sup> Dan. 2:46. 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, <sup>1</sup> and would have done sacrifice with the people.

14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard

posed to have been a corrupt Greek. This fact of their shouting in their rude dialect is mentioned as showing that the missionaries could not have understood the people, nor have known what they proposed to do till they were ready with the sacrifice. ¶ *The gods.* The heathen believed that their divinities, as Jupiter, Mercury, &c., sometimes visited the earth, and the people of this district had a tradition that these two gods, Jupiter and Mercury, wandered in the neighboring province of Phrygia and visited men, who entertained them. It was, therefore, only a heathen way of expressing the conviction that their miraculous work was supernatural. OBSERVE.—(1) That which was a superstitious belief in Lycaonia became a blessed reality in Bethlehem. (2) Such a tradition expressed the longings of the human mind after a personal manifestation of God; and it was the trace of a prevailing belief that God would come down to us in the likeness of man. (3) The Lycaonic being the native language and the Greek an acquired tongue, they naturally give expression to their profound amazement in the former.

12. *Jupiter.* This god was worshiped among the heathen as the supreme leader and head of the gods. Barnabas may have had this name because of some advantage in personal appearance, as Paul declares of himself that his own bodily presence was accounted weak. (2 Cor. 10:1, 10.) ¶ *Paul—Mercurius.* A reason is here given for this distinction, “because he was the chief speaker,” or *led in discourse.* Mercury was worshiped as the god of eloquence, and he was the attendant of Jupiter as spokesman, a small and slender in form.

13. *Then.* At once those heathen proceed to pay superstitious homage to the missionaries, whom they took to be gods. ¶ *The priest of Jupiter.* Jupiter is here spoken of as *before their city.* So it was customary to locate their gods where their temples stood. And so it was Jupiter “Propylus,” or *before the gates,* Jupiter Capitolinus, &c. ¶ *Brought oxen, &c.—Bullocks, and garlands* (wreaths of flowers) to adorn the victims, altars, priests, &c. ¶ *To the gates,* perhaps of the city where the temple stood, and whither they would naturally resort to do sacrifice. Some have supposed it to be the gates of the house in which the missionaries were then sojourning. But that would rather have been spoken of as *the gate,* than *the gates.* And it would seem from the next verse that the missionaries were not present, and the preparation may have been making at the city gates, and at the heathen temple of Jupiter, possibly with the view of bringing the missionaries thither. OBSERVE.—Such is the idolatrous practice of the Romish religion, offering sacrifice to the Virgin Mary, and paying divine powers to the Pope. We learn here what these Apostolic men would have thought and said of such idolatrous rites. ¶ *Would.* The terms read, *wished to sacrifice,* and the words *with the people,* (crowds) are connected more directly with the former clause, meaning simply that the people accompanied, or *joined in* the matter.

14. *The Apostles.* Clemens Alexandrinus twice calls Barnabas an Apostle, but elsewhere the “Apostolic Barnabas,” adding, “for he was one of the seventy, and a fellow laborer with Paul.” This shows the sense in which he called him an Apostle. See vs. 2

of, \*they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

15 And saying, Sirs, 'why do ye these things? " We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from "these vanities "unto the living God, \*which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein :

16 "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

17 "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and "gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

<sup>b</sup> Matt. 26: 65.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 10: 26.  
<sup>d</sup> James 5: 17.  
<sup>e</sup> Rev. 19: 10.  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Sam. 12: 21  
<sup>g</sup> 1 Kings 16: 13.  
<sup>h</sup> Jer. 14: 22.  
<sup>i</sup> Amos 2: 4.  
<sup>j</sup> 1 Cor. 8: 4.  
<sup>k</sup> 1 Thess. 1: 9.  
<sup>l</sup> Gen. 1: 1.  
<sup>m</sup> Ps. 33: 6, and 146: 6.  
<sup>n</sup> Rev. 14: 7.  
<sup>o</sup> Ps. 81: 12.  
<sup>p</sup> ch. 17: 30.  
<sup>q</sup> 1 Pet. 4: 3.  
<sup>r</sup> ch. 17: 27.  
<sup>s</sup> Rom. 1: 20.  
<sup>t</sup> Lev. 26: 4.  
<sup>u</sup> Deut. 11: 14, and 28: 12.  
<sup>v</sup> Job 5: 10.  
<sup>w</sup> Ps. 65: 10, & 68: 9, and 147: 8.  
<sup>x</sup> Jer. 14: 22.  
<sup>y</sup> Matt. 5: 45.

and note. They had not been aware of what was doing, but *when they heard*, probably by the report of some one who had seen these preparations at the gates—*they rent their clothes*. Among Orientals this is a common mode of expressing grief or abhorrence, as at blasphemy. Matt. 26: 65. The Jews rent their garments from the neck down in front toward the waist. ¶ *Ran in. Sprang in among the crowd.* It may read, *they rushed forth into the crowd.*

15. *Of like passions.* They protested vehemently against such an idolatrous act, declaring that it was utterly without reason—that they, instead of being gods, as they supposed, were also (like themselves) *men of like feelings*, of the same nature as they, the same human infirmities, mortal, &c. ¶ *And preach.* Literally, *evangelizing you*—proclaiming to you as glad tidings, to turn. The Gospel command to repentance is full of grace and love, and is to be received as glad tidings, because it calls us to turn from all that is vain, and false, and ruinous, to God, the source of all good. ¶ *These vanities, these emptinesses, nullities.* So the Hebrews called the idol gods of the heathen "nonentities," and Jehovah they called *He*, a living personal being. ¶ *The living God*, in contrast with these lifeless idols. The idols were powerless to help or save. (See Isaiah 44: 9.) Jehovah is the Creator of the universe, and is the only proper object of religious worship.

OBSERVE.—Arguing with the heathen, Paul reasons first from great principles of natural religion, and thus, as Grotius has remarked, he sets an example to missionaries among the heathen to adapt their reasonings to their hearers. (See at Athens, ch. 17: 24, &c.)

16. *Who—Jehovah—in times past.* Lit., *In generations gone by, permitted all the nations (Gentiles) to walk in their own ways*; i. e., left them alone to their natural blindness, because, as Paul shows in the Romans, (1: 23,) they deserted Him. God never sanctioned the natural depravities of the heathen, but He suffered them to go on without a written revelation, and without the special restraints of His published law. Paul elsewhere says, "The times of this ignorance God winked at," ch. 17: 30, in this sense.

17. *Nevertheless.* Although, indeed, they had no excuse for not knowing God, as Paul has clearly shown in Rom 1: 19, &c. ¶ *He left not himself unwitnessed*—untestified to. "For the invisible things of God from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse." Rom. 1: 20. ¶ *In that He did good.* Lit., *Doing good*, in His common providential bounties, and particularly *giving us rains from heaven*. As we learn from Strabo that there was the greatest scarcity of water in that district, rains were held as special instances of Divine favor. The more correct read

18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the people, that they had not done sacrifice unto them.

† ch. 13 : 45.

u 2 Cor. 11 : 25.  
2 Tim. 3 : 11.

19 ¶ And there came thither *certain* Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, "and having stoned Paul, drew *him* out of the city, supposing he had been dead.

20 Howbeit, as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and came into the city : and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city,

ing is, "giving you," &c. ¶ *Fruitful*—fruit-bearing seasons, filling (our) your hearts with food and gladness. OBSERVE.—Even to the heathen the common bounties of God's hand ought to be the sufficient proofs of His existence, and ought to win to the acknowledgment of Him. What must be thought of those in Christian lands, who enjoy all these mercies, and all the means of grace, and yet in effect deny the very being of God—"without God in the world."

18. *And with these sayings.* Lit., *Saying these things they scarcely*—with difficulty—restrained the crowds that they did not sacrifice to them. There was no synagogue at Lystra, and the people were given up to superstitions.

19. *They came thither.* Lit., *Came upon* (them,) with hostile intent—*Jews*. The Jews, in every instance except two, stirred up the persecutions which Paul suffered. These Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and were probably some of those very persecutors who lately drove them out of those cities. Of course, they gave exaggerated accounts of all that had occurred with them, and crowds of cities are moved commonly by what is done in other cities, to do likewise. ¶ *Who persuaded the people—the crowds—the populace; and having stoned Paul.* The Jews probably accused them of blasphemy against the heathen gods whom they called "*vanities*"—*nonentities*, and by such arts as they had found successful in their own cities, they were allowed to stone him, the heathen joining them. ¶ *Drew him.* Rather, *dragged him violently out of the city*. The Greeks sometimes dragged

the bodies of criminals through the streets and cast them out of the city, as unworthy of burial. This was done to Paul as the leader. This is the instance to which he refers, "*Once was I stoned,*" 2 Cor. 11 : 25 ; 2 Tim. 3 : 11. OBSERVE.—How fickle is the popular feeling, and how unreliable in the cause of Christ. How heathen treachery, that would one moment almost deify the missionary, may the next moment be led to put him to death, as with the martyred missionaries at Cawnpore!

20. *Howbeit—but.* "Persecuted but not forsaken, cast down but not destroyed." *The disciples, the converts at Lystra, having stood round about him,*—lit., *having encircled him*, (as he was cast out for dead,) anxious to see what was his condition, and to bury him if he were indeed dead. ¶ *He rose up,* some think by miraculous restoration, and this would seem necessary, at least, to account for his so promptly returning to the city and the next day going on his journey. It has been suggested that this may have been the time of Paul's *trance*, (2 Cor. 12 : 1–4.) ¶ *With Barnabas.* Barnabas escaped, not by any wicked compromise, else Paul would not so at once have joined him in the mission again. ¶ *To Derbe.* See vs. 6, note. A recent traveler, Hamilton, has found the site, as he thinks, at a place called *Divle*, east of Caraman, and Lystra at Ben Bir Kisseh, on the direct road from Derbe to Iconium.

21. *Preached.* Lit., *Evangelized*—published the good news. ¶ *Taught.* Lit., *Discipled*. This is the term used in

\*and † had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, <sup>a Matt. 28:19.</sup> and to Iconium, and Antioch, <sup>† lit. had made many disciples.</sup>

22 Confirming the souls of the disciples, <sup>† ch. 11:23, and 13:43, 2 Matt. 10:38, and 16:24, Luke 22:28, 29, Rom. 8:17, 2 Tim. 2:11, 12 and 3:12, a Tit. 1:5.</sup> and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that \* we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.

23 And when they had \* ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

our Lord's commission, Matt. 28:19, "Teach all nations"—"Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them." This, of course, refers to gathering them into a Church, as a body of professing disciples. ¶ *Returned—turned back.* Their labors in Derbe are only spoken of in the general, and probably few persecutions befell them there. ¶ *Lystra, &c.* The wonder is that after such severe hostilities had sprung up against them in these cities of Pisidia, they should have returned thither so soon. It is a striking coincidence that Paul, in referring to his sufferings, mentions only these three cities and not Derbe, (2 Tim. 3:11,) though elsewhere Derbe and Lystra are mentioned by him together. The reason is, that in Derbe he seems not to have encountered persecution, as in the other named cities. OBSERVE.—Derbe was the extreme limit eastward of Paul's first missionary journey.

22. *Confirming—strengthening,* as only spiritual instruction and Christian consolation could strengthen their souls. The reference is not to any religious rite, but to the doctrine and exhortation which follow. Their interest in these newly gathered Churches led them to face all the dangers of a return thither, in order to fortify them against discouragements or temptations to give up their faith. ¶ *They exhorted them to continue—to abide in—the Gospel faith,* which they had lately professed; and they also *exhorted them that through many tribulations it is necessary* (according to the Divine plan) *that we enter into the kingdom of God.* This is a doctrine applicable to all ages of the Church, and agrees with the Apostle's vision, (Rev. 7:14,) 22\*

"These are they who came out of the great tribulation." As these had entered the visible kingdom, the Church on earth, the reference here must be to the invisible kingdom in heaven.

23. *Ordained them. Ordained to (or for) them—the Churches.* These Apostolic missionaries not only gathered the disciples into separate bands for the enjoyment of the ordinances, but they took care to furnish them a regular Church organization, by the ordaining of elders in every Church. The term here used means originally, *to vote by stretching out the hand,* and so some of the Reformed commentators, as Erasmus and Beza, render it "created by votes." But the word came to be used for any kind of appointment, ch. 10:41. And here, as it is plainly the act of the Apostles, it could not have been their voting that is here referred to. Much less is there any ground for Jerome's rendering, "when they had laid hands on elders." *Alford* has taken the right view. "The Apostles ordained the presbyters whom the Churches elected." This was the mode, ch. 6:2-6; see 2 Cor. 8:19, where this word is used. ¶ *Elders—presbyters.* This term is used in the New Testament in the same sense as the term for bishops, see ch. 20:17, 28; Tit. 1:5, 7; 1 Peter 5:1, 2, and is applied to teaching elders, whom we call ministers, or bishops of single Churches, and also to ruling elders, whose office it is to rule in the Church with the minister or pastor, and not to teach. That there were these two classes of elders in the Primitive Church, is plain from 1 Tim. 5:17. Here also, it would seem that both classes are meant. These apostolic missionaries wished to organize these

24 And after they had passed throughout Pisidia, they came to Pamphylia.

25 And when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia:

<sup>b</sup> ch. 13:1, 3.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 15:40.

26 And thence sailed to Antioch, <sup>b</sup> from whence they had been <sup>c</sup> recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled.

27 And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, <sup>d</sup> they rehearsed all that God had done

Churches regularly, and leave them in charge of the officers necessary for their oversight, instruction and government. This is also intimated by the record that there were several of these elders ordained in every Church. See Titus 1:5. The Presbyterian Church is so called because it has several elders, or presbyters, in every Church. One called minister, bishop, pastor, who teaches, and also rules, with a body of ruling elders, and these also are called *elders*, as those who rule, but do not labor in word and doctrine. Accordingly in the Church at Philippi, (Phil. 1:1,) we find *bishops* (more than one) spoken of, as over that Church; and the deacons also are named. It may be that *deacons* were also included in the officers appointed by these missionaries, and that the elders only are named as comprehending the chief officers. But the elders were of leading importance in the organizing of Churches, as it was their function to rule, (but not that of deacons) and while elders generally are spoken of, (bishops) both classes of them, as both classes were rulers in the Church, may fairly be meant. ¶ *Prayed with fasting—fastings*, on these successive occasions. This was customary at such solemn seasons; as at the commissioning of these Apostolic missionaries by the Church of Antioch, 13:3. It was also every way natural and appropriate. Accordingly, with these solemn services they commended them—the Churches—in sacred trust to the Lord (Jesus,) on whom they (the Churches,) (had) believed. It was in profession of this believing on Christ that these bodies of disciples were now gathered into regular Church organi-

zations, and furnished with a regular ministry.

24. *Passed through.* They traversed this province of Pisidia from Antioch (north) to Pamphylia (south,) and preached the word, *discoursed*, in Perga, where they seem to have passed through on their way without stopping there to preach. *They went down* (still passing southward) *to Attalia*, which lay about sixteen miles off, on the sea coast, in Pamphylia, near the mouth of the river Catarrachtes, and west of the river Cestus, up which they had sailed to Perga when they came from Cyprus. This port was built by Attalus Philadelphus, about 150 B. C., and was a town of some business note.

26. *Sailed—sailed off* to Antioch, (in Syria,) *from whence they had been commended*—committed, given up—to the grace of God unto (for) the work, (with a view to the work,) *which they fulfilled, filled up, completed.* These Apostolic missionaries had been sent out by the Church at Antioch, on this particular mission. In view of this work, they had been solemnly commended, intrusted (with prayer and fasting) to the grace of God, (whom they served,) see ch. 13:3, and this work they had *filled up*, and accordingly they now return to make their report to the Church at Antioch, whose missionaries they were.

27. *Come—having arrived, and assembled the Church*, (the Church-membership of Antioch,) in a great missionary meeting, *they rehearsed* (told over) *how great things God had done with* (to or for) *them*, or *wrought with them*, as instruments, in the conversion of so many souls, “the greater things”

with them, and how he had \*opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.

1 Cor. 16:9.  
2 Cor. 2:12.  
Col. 4:3.  
Rev. 3:8.

28 And there they abode long time with the disciples.

than the miracles even of Christ, (John 14:12,) which it was promised that the Apostles and those who believed on Christ should do. ¶ *Had opened.* And how (or that) he had opened to the Gentiles (the nations) a door of faith—had given them admittance to the Gospel and its blessings, so that they were no longer excluded, but brought in to a level with the covenant people; and even to be engrafted on that stock from which the Jews would be cut off. OBSERVE.—This was a further step than had yet been taken in the missionary work. Previously the Gentile converts had been proselytes chiefly. Now they were degraded idolaters—heathen.

28. *A long time.* Supposing, as is generally held, that they started out late in A. D. 45, and that the Synod at Jerusalem was convened in A. D. 50, we may assign about two years to this missionary journey, (see ch. 12:25; 13:3,) and about as long a time to this abode in Antioch with the disciples, as returned missionaries, who now resumed their work as prophets and teachers, (ch. 13:1,) in this Mother Church of Gentile Christendom. Here they could further instruct this parent Church of the Gentiles—that is, the whole membership at Antioch, in the universality of the Church, as against Jewish exclusiveness; and in the world-wide plans that were to be set on foot for the ingathering of the nations. And the glorious successes of their mission to the idolatrous cities of the West, would give them great power under God with the people.

#### CHAPTER XV.

24. FURTHER PROGRESS OF THE CHURCH—INTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS—FIRST APOSTOLIC SYNOD—PAUL'S THIRD VISIT TO JERUSALEM. A.D. 50. Ch. 15:1-35.

This chapter records another con-

troversy arising out of Judaism, which results in a further progress of the truth. The great event of the age, the reception of the Gentiles to the Church starts a question of great moment. It was clearly enough to be understood from the Old Testament Scriptures, that the Gentiles were to be gathered in. But the Jews had thought at first that they were to come in through the Jewish door, by being first made proselytes to Judaism. The events at Caesarea and at Antioch in Syria, had fixed that point in favor of the free admission of Gentiles, without the intervention of Judaism. Yet the Jewish prejudice cleaved to the idea of some exclusive privilege of theirs. At least it was argued that the Mosiac institutions were permanent, as they were of Divine authority, and therefore that they must be still binding upon Jews and Gentiles. This was pressed, therefore, by the Judaizers, upon the Gentile converts at Antioch, and continued to trouble the Church at large, even after it was authoritatively settled by the Synod's decrees at Jerusalem, as recorded in this chapter. Paul's Epistles to the Romans, and Galatians, and Hebrews, show how long and obstinate was this perversion in the Church, as it was insisted on and zealously propagated by Judaizing teachers.

Here occurs also a development of the Church polity—the pattern and warrant for COURTS OF REVIEW AND CONTROL in the Christian Church. The peace and order of the Church were secured by the authoritative action of this Synod, settling a question of great moment, and sending down to the Churches their *δόγματα* or decrees.

We have seen that in the Primitive Apostolical Church there was (beside the Apostleship, which was extraordinary and without succession,) 1. *PARITY OF THE MINISTRY*—the presbyter, or bishop, being the pastor of a single Church. 2. *THE CO-OPERATION*

## CHAPTER XV.

<sup>a</sup> Gal. 2:12.

<sup>b</sup> John 7:22.

vs. 5.

Gal. 5:2.

Phil. 3:2.

Col. 2:8, 11, 16.

<sup>c</sup> Gen. 17:10.

Lev. 12:3.

<sup>d</sup> Gal. 2:1.

1 AND <sup>a</sup>certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, *and said*, <sup>b</sup>Except ye be circumcised <sup>c</sup>after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2 When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that

<sup>a</sup>Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

OF THE RULING ELDERSHIP in the government of the Church. 3. COURTS OF REVIEW AND CONTROL. 4. A bench of DEACONS to distribute the alms of the Church, but not to rule nor to preach.

1. *Certain men.* Paul refers to these in Gal. 2:4, as "false brethren unawares brought in," &c. They came down from Judea, Jewish in all their pretensions and prejudices; probably most, if not all, Jerusalem Jews, and falsely representing themselves as commissioned by the Apostles at Jerusalem. "They seemed to be somewhat," Paul says, Gal. 2:6. They *taught*; the verb, implying that it was not a single or casual teaching, but habitual and formal. *The brethren*—the Gentile converts of Antioch. ¶ *Except.* This is given as the doctrine they taught—the substance of what they said. ¶ *Circumcised.* This stands for the observance of the Mosaic ceremonial, as it was the initiatory rite of that system. (Gal. 5:3.) ¶ *After the manner.* According to the custom, ordinance of Moses. This observance of the Mosaic rites they held to be indispensable. They do not say that this was of itself saving; but that without it, whatever else ye do, *ye cannot be saved.* If they could no longer hold that it was indispensable to admission into the Messiah's kingdom, they held that it was requisite as a completion or ratification of baptism. Circumcision, held to in this light, was a profession of being bound to an observance of the whole ritual law, and subverted the doctrine of justification by faith in Christ, (Gal. 3:18; Rom. 4:4.) They could not hold this without "falling from grace," that is, from the doctrine

of salvation by grace, as distinct from the works of the law. (Gal. 5:4.)

2. *Dissension.* Then, (on account of this false teaching,) *a no small party-quarrel and discussion arising to Paul and Barnabas with them.* These returned missionaries were they who had just been out organizing Churches among the Gentiles, on the principle of freedom from the binding obligation of the Mosaic observances; and they were therefore attacked in violent terms. Paul referring to the controversy, says, "To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour," Gal. 2:5. ¶ *They determined*—that is, the brethren, (vs. 1,) the members of the Church at Antioch appointed that Paul and Barnabas, and certain (some) others of them, (of the opponents, or simply of the officers or members of the Church.) It would seem from Gal. 2:1-3, that Titus was one of the delegation, and that was "in order (as *Alford* suggests,) to give an example of a Gentile convert of the uncircumcision endowed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost." Though Paul speaks of having gone up "by revelation," (Gal. 2:2,) this is no way inconsistent with his going, also, by the appointment of the Church, for they are also said to have been sent out as missionaries, both by the Church and by the Holy Ghost, ch. 13:3, 4. ¶ *The Apostles and Elders.* The delegates went up to Jerusalem for a formal settlement of this vexed question. The Apostles there represented the Church at large, ch. 8:1. But, according to the system of Church government already established, the Elders, or local rulers of the Church at Jerusalem, sat with them in the formal

3 And <sup>g</sup>being brought on their way by the church, <sup>h</sup>they passed through Phenice and Samaria, <sup>i</sup>declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

4 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and <sup>j</sup>of the apostles and elders, and <sup>k</sup>they declared all things that God had done with them.

5 But there <sup>l</sup>rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, <sup>m</sup>That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command <sup>n</sup>them to keep the law of Moses.

6 ¶ And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

decision of this (*question*) dispute. Observe.—It was to the Apostles and Elders, as having the authority in the Church, and not to the brethren, that these delegates were sent.

3. *And—they then being sent forward by the Church*—that is, being attended on their way for some distance, (as a mark of respect and indorsement of their mission,) either by the officers, or by so many of the members as could conveniently escort them, (see Romans 15 : 24; 1 Cor. 16 : 6, 11; 2 Cor. 1 : 16,) *they passed (leisurely) through Phenice* (Phenicia) on the Mediterranean coast, *and (the province of) Samaria*—both lying on their route to Jerusalem. The Phenician and Samaritan converts would not be so prejudiced against the Gentiles, as they had not been brought up in the bitter jealousies of the Pharisees. The Christian Church in Phenicia had been planted probably at Tyre and Sidon, ch. 11 : 19. Christ had wrought miracles in that vicinity, (Matt 15 : 21,) and in Samaria our Lord had preached, and Philip had labored and planted the Gospel, John 4 : 5; ch. 8 : 5. Here these commissioners to the Synod journeyed along, *declaring (narrating, in detail,) the conversion of the Gentiles to God. And they caused (made) great joy unto all the brethren*—all the converts there, by this report of God's doings. (1) The conversion of other souls is always the source of great joy to the true people of God. (2) Only the grace of God can make such brethren and friends of strangers.

4. And, *having arrived at Jerusalem, they were (cordially) received of (by) the Church*—publicly and officially recognized as a delegation sent by “the Church” of Antioch. And they were thus favorably and formally received by *the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem*, to whom they were sent, vs. 2. And they *declared—reported, officially in public, how great things God had done with them*—His wonderful dealings with them in planting so many Gentile Churches by their instrumentality. These facts were most important to be made known for the settlement of this question.

5. *But.* Here Luke narrates what occurred at the giving in of the report. Immediately *there rose up* (from the assembly) *some of those from the sect of the Pharisees, which believed.* Some who were probably distinguished Pharisees, yet belonging to the Church, the body of professed believers. The early converts from Judaism naturally brought with them into the Church some of their Jewish notions and prejudices, as here; *saying that it is necessary to circumcise them*, (the Gentile converts, vs. 3,) &c. This was the position taken by the Judaizing teachers from Jerusalem, (vs. 1.) They did not dispute the authority of Paul and Barnabas, nor the conversion of the Gentiles; only they insisted on this conformity with the Mosaic ritual, claiming that the Gentiles should come into the Church through the door of Judaism.

6. *Accordingly the Apostles and Elders came together* (literally, *were as-*



<sup>† ch. 10:29,  
and 11:12.</sup> 7 And when there had been much disputing, Peter rose up, and said unto them, 'Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

*sembled*) to see concerning this matter. Literally, this word, (or doctrine or report.) The question was now formally brought up by the motion of these Pharisaic believers, vs. 5. And the Apostles and Elders who (vs. 4,) had publicly received the delegation and heard their general report, now convened for the express purpose of attending to this question, submitted by the Christian Pharisees. This was the object of the delegation. Some have regarded this public action as inconsistent with Paul's statement, Gal. 2:9, and have therefore supposed that another visit must be referred to there. But it would seem that Paul had also these private conferences with "the pillars," Peter, James and John, so as thus to conciliate them to his views by a fuller statement and argument than would be heard at first in the Synod. See Gal. 2:2, 6. The Apostles are spoken of as having equal rank, and their charge was universal, and not confined to one Church only. Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 11:28. "Of course they are no more to be reckoned in the order of bishops of a particular Church than the pretorian prefects of old in the rank of governors of one city or province."—*Spanheim*. ¶ *Elders*. "In the Apostles' age, (says *Spanheim*,) there were presbyteries, or colleges of bishops or presbyters, in every Church, who had the administration and guidance thereof ordinarily, of which presbyters some gave themselves more to the word and doctrine, (1 Tim. 5:17,) others to government and discipline. Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 12:28." Of the Apostles, Peter, James, John and Paul were present, perhaps others; besides those Apostolical preachers, Barnabas, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, Silas, (vs. 22,) and Titus, Gal. 2:2. It would seem also that the Church members were admitted to the delib-

erations of this council or Synod. Accordingly, in vs. 12, "the multitude" is spoken of, and in vs. 22, the final action taken by the Synod is in the name of the whole Church, and with their sanction—the Synod acting authoritatively, but with the Church, that is, as representatives of the whole Church. OBSERVE.—It was a convention of Apostles and Elders—not of the whole membership—and it was the Synod who (vs. 2, 22, 23,) acted, and with them agreed the body of believers.

7. *Much disputation arising*, on both sides, in which it would seem from vs. 12 the private members were involved, though not forming any part of the official council. *Peter rising up, said unto them, &c.* This is the last instance in which Peter appears in the history, and here he takes a prominent part in the discussion, not from any official primacy of his, of which there is no trace in the sacred Scriptures, but from the part he had taken in opening the door of admission to the Gentiles. To this important fact therefore he here refers. ¶ *A good while ago*. Literally, *from ancient ages*, which he calls "at the beginning." See ch. 11:15, where he gave an explanation of this matter some ten years before this. He probably refers to the vision which God gave him at Joppa to show the free reception of the Gentiles to the Church, and the admission of Cornelius at Cesarea, without circumcision. Lightfoot thinks the reference is still farther back to the promise of "the keys." Matt. 16:19. But the keys there promised to Peter, were given to the Apostles (the eleven) together. *God chose out from among us, (Apostles) that the Gentiles (as a class) should hear the word of the Gospel by my mouth, and believe*. This providential arrangement and choice of instrumental agency was God's work, as well as the

8 And God, \*which knoweth the hearts, bare them <sup>21 Chron. 28:8  
ch. 1:28.  
1 ch. 10:44.</sup> witness, 'giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9 <sup>m Rom. 10:14.  
n ch. 10:15, 46  
43.</sup> And put no difference between us and them, "purifying their hearts by faith.

10 Now therefore why tempt ye God, °to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11 But <sup>p Rom. 3:24.  
Eph. 2:8.  
Titus 2:11, and  
3:4, 5.</sup> we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

Gospel itself, and the result of their preaching was as much comprehended in the plan of God, as the agency itself, or the message. Peter was he who was specially chosen to open the door to the Gentiles; yet not without the approval of the rest, whom he now reminds of the circumstances.

8. Peter means now to argue from the gracious results of this preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, that God had settled the question now before them, putting His own seal upon the free admission of the Gentiles to the kingdom. ¶ *God, which knoweth the hearts*, (literally, *the heart-knower*, ch. 1:24,) and who therefore looks not on the outward distinctions of Jew or Gentile, but hath concluded all under sin. *Bare them witness*—bare witness to them (the Gentiles) as His chosen people, *giving to them the Holy Ghost, even as He did unto us*. His argument is "that God had settled the whole question of the equality of Jews and Gentiles as subjects of His kingdom, by actually making them equally subjects of His grace."

9. *And put no difference*—did not discriminate between us (Jews) and *em*, (Gentiles,) both being on an equality in this respect, *purifying their hearts* in a spiritual circumcision, Rom. 29, taking away all their native purity by faith, and not by ceremonial observances—by faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, (and not of beasts,) which cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:7.)

10. *Now therefore*—after such proof from God's actual testimony in His dealings, that He does not discard

the Gentiles because of their nonperformance of Judaic rites—*why tempt ye God*—that is, why do ye put Him to the test by trying His forbearance, and thus provoke Him, (Heb. 3:8, 9,) so as to put a yoke upon the neck of the Disciples, called in Gal. 5:1, "the yoke of bondage." This, as we learn from the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, was the yoke of the law imposed upon the conscience as a ground of justification—the yoke of salvation by works, instead of by faith—including the ritual observances, which were so burdensome to their fathers and to themselves. Gal. 2:8. This was an appeal to their own consciences, that salvation could not be had by the law.

11. *But*—so far from deeming it right to impose such burdensome conditions upon the Gentile brethren—we, that is, the Apostles and Jewish converts—*believe to be saved*—fully expect to be saved—*through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*, in distinction from legal conditions; therefore of grace and not of debt. (Rom. 4:4, 5.) Both Jews and Gentiles must be saved in the same way, by the same only Saviour: "Even we ourselves who are Jews originally, having embraced the faith of Christ, are most certainly persuaded that not by circumcision or other rites of the Mosaic law, but by the gracious reconciliation of us to God, we shall obtain eternal salvation purchased by the sacrifice of the death of Christ." Gal. 2:14, 15, 16.—*De Veil*. ¶ *Even as they* (the Gentiles.) Literally, *according to the same manner as they*. Peter argues that such an imposition upon the Gentiles was inconsistent with

12 ¶ Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

ch. 14: 27.

r ch. 12: 17.

13 ¶ And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me:

vs. 7.

14 Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

the belief and hope of the converted Jews themselves. They could not rest in the law for salvation. Why then enforce the law, with its badge of circumcision, upon these Gentiles?

12. After this argument and appeal of Peter, *all the multitude* (including the private members present, who had been embroiled in the debate,) *kept silence and heard Barnabas and Paul declaring how great miracles (signs) and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.* This narrative of the Apostolic missionaries served to confirm the impression produced by Peter's argument. It showed that God had put His approval upon their ministry among the Gentiles without requiring circumcision—the same as pleaded elsewhere, (ch. 14: 27; 21: 19; Rom. 15: 18, 19.) The miracles at Paphos and Lystra would be prominently cited.

13. *And after they* (Paul and Barnabas) *were silent, James answered*, (responded to what had been said, or spoke to the question which was before them.) This James is often called "the Apostle of the Transition." He represented the strict, legal view, yet with a side to progress, and would naturally ascribe to the law all the advantage which it could have for Christians. (Rom. 7: 12.) His opinion, therefore, on the side of Peter in this question, would have great weight in favor of the freedom of the Gentiles, and would tend to silence the Pharisaic disputers. He is called by Paul one of "the pillars," with Peter and John, Gal. 2: 9, and he was probably that James the son of Alphaeus, who was an Apostle, called also James the Less, and the same who was the author of the Epistle of James. Some make him to be one of the brethren of the Lord, who

was at first unbelieving. (See John 7: 5 and notes.) But he was the cousin of our Lord, as he was the son of Alphaeus, and in the Oriental usage, such a near relation was called a brother. Gal. 1: 19. It is to be observed that the names of our Lord's brethren as given (Mark 6: 3,) are given in part as the names of the children of Alphaeus, (Matt 27: 56,) which corroborates the view just given. (See *Birk's Hæc Paulinæ.*) James seems at this time to have been the Apostle who most of all had the charge of the Church at Jerusalem, (ch. 21: 18,) but there is no trace of his officiating in any other capacity than as Apostle. ¶ *Hearken—hear me.* Peter and James both delivered their views in the Synod. These are two of the pillars, and the very two whose judgment would be looked on as most important in the case. Therefore, though others may also have spoken, these only are reported.

14. *Simeon*—after the Hebrew form for Simon—so used also in 2 Pet. 1: 1. In both cases it is used in a Hebrew connection. James first of all refers to the testimony just given by Peter, and confirms his view. This surely looks like an equality of these Apostles in the Synod. There is nothing here like Peter being head, universal bishop, Pope—nor like James being Diocesan Bishop, though, as Calvin remarks, if either speaks with more authority than the other, it is James. *Peter hath declared* (in detail,—literally, *given an exegesis of*,) *how God at the first* (first of all—beforehand of any human action in the case,) *did visit* (surveyed as a bishop or overseer,) *to take out from among these Gentiles a people for His name.* God had, therefore, settled this question in advance, by visiting Cornelius and Peter in vision by His

15 And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16 'After this I will return and will build again the <sup>†Amos 9: 11.</sup> <sup>12.</sup> tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17 That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18 Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19 Wherefore "my sentence is, that we trouble not" <sup>vs. 29.</sup> them, which from among the Gentiles "are turned to God:" <sup>1 Thess. 1: 9.</sup>

Spirit before any preaching to the Gentiles, (vs. 7; ch. 10: 44, 45,) and with the view of gathering—calling out a Church—a covenant people for His name, to be called by His name, and for His glory. Rom. 9: 25, 26.

15. *And.* The Apostle now proceeds to show that this action of God in regard to the Gentiles was no invasion or alteration of the ancient economy, but was all along contemplated in their Old Testament Scriptures and foretold by the prophets, and that the facts detailed by Peter are the fulfillment of these predictions. Therefore, the free admission of the Gentiles without circumcision was that which was foretold by the prophets, as Amos.

16, 17. This prediction of Amos, (ch. 9: 11, 12,) is applied by the Apostle to that spiritual upbuilding of Christ's kingdom, which began in his Incarnation and most remarkably went forward in the ingathering of the Gentiles, as reported by the Apostolic missionaries. The promise to David was that he should have a son to sit for ever on his throne. This was fulfilled only in Christ. And now, when David's family estate was reduced from a royal palace to a shifting tent or tabernacle, and had fallen in ruins, God had fulfilled the promise in building it up, by raising up Christ as David's promised son, (Rom. 1: 3,) who was to "restore the kingdom again to Israel," (ch. 1: 6,) and make it more glorious than in its best days of David and Solomon, by the ingathering of the Gentiles. Isa. chs. 55, 60, 61, 32, 65.

17. *That the residue*—remainder, such as were not Jews. The prophet has it, "*that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations.*" Edom, (Esau,) or Idumea, was instanced as a type of the notorious and bitter enemies of the covenant people; and that the remnant of these were to be possessed or gathered in, is the same as to say that the remnant (Rom. 9: 27,) of all aliens and enemies among the Gentiles, were to be converted. The Idumeans, also, were subjected by David. ¶ *Seek—seek out the Lord, and all the Gentiles.* This explains the meaning of the former clause. ¶ *Upon whom my name is called*—has been called. These are characterized as His covenant people, "called by His name," though they were formerly no people, Deut. 32: 21; Hos. 2: 23; Rom. 10: 19. It was as certain as if already done.

18. *Known.* The idea is now pressed, that this admission of the Gentiles without the intervention of Judaism, was no innovation nor subversion of the ancient economy, but was always planned by God. The facts agree with the prophecy, and the prophecy with the plan of God *from the beginning of the world.* This prophecy was uttered nearly eight hundred years before the event, about the time of the founding of ancient Rome.

19. *Wherefore.* On the ground of God's actual dealings, as long ago foretold by the prophets, and therefore as planned and carried out by God, having all Divine authority—*my sen-*

Gen. 35: 2.  
Ex. 20: 3, 23.  
Lev. 20: 30.  
1 Cor. 8: 1.  
Rev. 2: 14, 20,  
and 9: 20, 21.  
1 Cor. 6: 9, 18.  
Gal. 5: 19.  
Eph. 5: 3.

20 But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and <sup>\*</sup>from fornication, and <sup>\*</sup>from things strangled, <sup>\*</sup>and <sup>\*</sup>from blood.

21 For Moses of old time hath in every city them that

tence is—lit., *I judge*—or, as we would say in a Synod, “my opinion is,” or, “I move.” This was the form in Greek assemblies, *ἐγὼ κρίνω*. That there is nothing here like an authoritative sentence passed by James, is plain enough from the term here used, and from the context, vs. 22, where it appears that the Apostles and Elders acted upon the proposal, or motion, or opinion of James. ¶ *That we trouble not.* Lit., *not to trouble* (further) *those from the Gentiles who are turning unto God*—not to molest them by the addition of those Jewish ceremonies to the simple Gospel requirement of faith.

20. *But to send an epistle unto them* (to the end) *that they may abstain* (withhold themselves) *from pollutions of idols*—that is, from things offered to idols, 1 Cor. 10: 14–20, 21; see vs. 29. The heathen were accustomed to sell in the markets, or to eat at feasts, the part of the meat remaining from their animal sacrifices. Any partaking of this was regarded by the Jews as sharing in the sin of idolaters, Rom. 14: 15; 1 Cor. 8: 10. Therefore it was to be abstained from, though not in itself and essentially sinful; yet out of regard to the consciences of their brethren. Connected with this, also, was the gross sin of *fornication*, which belonged to idol worship. The Gentiles regarded this practice as indifferent, and not in itself sinful. “It is also worthy of notice, that the denial of a moral obligation in this particular has formed a prominent feature in the ethical systems of the most celebrated modern infidels.”—*Hind's Hist.* Therefore, they are charged to abstain from this sin, not because it was the only sin, but as so connected with the idol worship of the heathen. These things are named together, not as being on a level, but as being associated in the heathen practice, and as being regarded alike by the Gentiles, and the one as connected with and leading to the

other. They are charged to abstain even from what is in itself indifferent, the partaking of things offered to idols, because it belonged to a system which countenanced fornication, as well as dishonored God and rejected Him for idols, 1 Cor. 6: 15; 1 Thess. 4: 3, 4. It was as much as to charge them to have nothing whatever to do with the heathen usages, first or last, least or greatest. Do not even eat of the things which their worship has polluted, and much more have nothing to do with their vile abominations. So the Psalmist resolves, personating also the Messiah, and expressing thus his abhorrence and avoidance of all sinful associations, “Their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips,” Ps. 16: 4. Licentious festivals of the heathen were notoriously common in Syria. ¶ *Things strangled, and from blood*—from animals slain without shedding the blood, and therefore having the blood in them, and from blood in its separate use. These may be regarded as in effect one. Blood in its separate use had been forbidden in the Noachic precepts, Gen. 9: 4—and in the law, as having in it the seat of life, and as being a standing symbol of expiation, Lev. 17: 10–13; Deut. 12: 23, 24. An awe was thus thrown around *blood*, so as to teach the people of the great blood-shedding, and of that precious blood of Jesus Christ, which cleanseth us from all sin, (1 John 1: 7.) Therefore, because the Jewish brethren had long regarded these things as unlawful to be used, the Gentile converts were charged to abstain from them for peace’ sake, and while this delicate relation of the Christian Church to Judaism should continue. Besides, they were thus pointed to what was the evangelical purport of the Jewish ordinances—the blood-shedding and expiation of Christ.

21. *For Moses.* This is assigned as a

preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

22 Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren :

Col. 3:5.  
1 Thes. 4:9.  
1 Pet. 4:3.  
a Gen. 9:4.  
Lev. 3:17.  
Deut. 12:16, 23.  
b ch. 13:15, 27.

c ch. 1:23.

reason for decreeing these restrictions, to wit: that the public reading and exposition of the Mosaic ritual every Sabbath in the Jewish synagogues would naturally keep the Jews alive to these restrictions and make any disregard of them, by the Gentiles, a sore offense. "Besides (says Calvin,) he teaches that ceremonies cannot be so quickly absolved as it were at the first stroke. They should therefore conciliate until such time as the liberty gotten by Christ might, by little and little, more plainly appear, according to the old proverb, that old ceremonies should be buried with some honor." Others understand it as a reason why it was important to make this decree to the Gentile converts. Because, Moses being constantly read in the synagogues, which they attended,) they might else hold themselves as obligated to the law as a ground of justification. ¶ *Of old time.* Literally, *from ancient generations*—a strong expression to denote the earliest times. Moses had been preached—*proclaimed*—from the beginning. ¶ *In every city.* This was the universal custom. ¶ *Being read.* The law of Moses was publicly read in the Jewish synagogues, which proselytes and other Gentiles also attended. Exposition and exhortation commonly accompanied the preaching. 2 Cor. 3:13. ¶ *Every Sabbath day.* The Jewish Sabbath is here referred to—the seventh day of the week, and not the Christian Sabbath—the Lord's day. The Jewish converts, for many years, continued to observe the former, while they also kept sacred the latter—the former in memory of the creation, the latter of the resurrection. The former was now optional, the latter was required. Sabbatizing was afterwards denounced by Christian writers, that is, a Jewish observance of the Chris-

tian Sabbath, cumbering it with burdensome rites and Pharisaic restrictions—very much as we find some of the Reformers denouncing the same thing in the formalistic, superstitious practices of the Papacy. But the holy keeping of the Christian Sabbath as a day of sacred rest and worship, according to the spirit of the fourth commandment, is most earnestly enjoined. The custom of the early Christian Church furnishes no ground for laxity in the observance of the Sabbath. For, instead of regarding the Sabbath law as abrogated, they rather kept two Sabbaths for a time, showing that they held the fourth commandment to be of most binding force. It was only when the seventh day Sabbath was held by any as instead of the Christian Sabbath and so as to stand in the way of it, or supersede it, that it was counted an offense, and denounced. So the keeping of the various Jewish Sabbath-days was regarded as unlawful Judaizing. (Col. 2:16, 17.)

22. This "motion" or opinion of the Apostle James had the effect to bring the Synod to a decision. *Then it pleased*—literally, *it seemed*, (good,) it was their *sentiment*, or *sentence*. It was not the opinion of James, but this of the *Apostles and the Elders*, that was authoritative. The Synod was composed of the Apostles and the Elders. It is here declared, however, that their action was *with the whole Church*. They acted in the name of the *whole Church*, and according to the Divine ordinance, they represented the whole Church. "The brethren," vs. 23, or private members of the Church, though they formed no part of the Synod, were doubtless admitted to their deliberations, and the official action had their full and hearty sanction, and was understood as their public and formal ex-

23 And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

24 Forasmuch as we have heard that <sup>d</sup>certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must* be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,

26 <sup>e</sup>Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

pression. It was determined, *having selected men from themselves*—from the Jerusalem Church, prophets or ruling elders, belonging to the Synod or not, to *send* (them) to Antioch, (as delegates or commissioners to the Church which had sent up the case for settlement.) Judas and Silas were both prophets, (vs. 32,) such as are spoken of in ch. 13:1. These were sent *with Paul and Barnabas*, the commissioners from the Church of Antioch. Silas—called in the Epistles Silvanus—was Paul's associate afterwards, in his second missionary tour, vs. 40; ch. 17:10, 14; 18:5; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 2 Cor. 1:19. ¶ *Chief men*. Leading men among the brethren in the Mother Church at Jerusalem.

23. A SYNODICAL EPISTLE was sent down to the Churches *by them*, &c.—literally, *by their hand—these things*. The Epistle is from “*the Apostles, and the Elders and the brethren*.” “*The brethren*,” (private members,) are named here, also, because they are understood as acting through their representatives, and many of the *brethren* seem to have been present in the assembly, giving their approbation and co-operation. This Epistle was addressed to the *brethren in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia, who were from the Gentiles*—while it was plainly designed to apply equally to all the Gentile Churches and brethren. Accordingly, Paul and Silas delivered these decrees to all the Churches among which they passed. ¶ *Syria and Cilicia*. Paul refers to his resi-

dence in these districts soon after his conversion, (see Gal. 1:21,) when he probably planted Churches there. Barnabas found him at Tarsus when he went for him to go to Antioch, ch. 9:30; 11:25. ¶ *Send greeting*. Literally, *to rejoice*. Bid them to rejoice—wish them joy. This is the usual Greek form of salutation in writing Epistles. We have it in no New Testament writing, except in the Epistle of James, which is an incidental proof of the same writer here. It is found also in the letter of Claudius Lysias, ch. 23:26.

24. *Forasmuch*. The preamble, or preface, states the occasion of their Synodical action. *Since we have heard that some going out from us*, (viz. teachers from Jerusalem, vs. 1, claiming to be somebody, Gal. 2:6, and probably pretending authority from the Church at Jerusalem,) *have troubled you with words*, (disturbed your Christian peace with statements and arguments,) *subverting your souls*, (unsettling and turning upside down your minds,) *saying it is necessary to be circumcised and to keep the law*, (the ceremonial law.) This was what these false teachers taught to be binding and necessary to salvation, (vss. 1, 5.) ¶ *To whom we gave no commandment*, or commission to teach these things, or to teach at all.

25, 26. *It seemed*—it was our sentiment, (or sentence, same as vs. 22,) *having become of one accord*, (after discussion agreeing,) *having selected men*.

27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by † mouth.

† Gr. word.

28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and  
 \* from blood, and from things strangled, and from forni-  
 cation: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do  
 well. Fare ye well.

vs. 20.  
 ch. 21: 25.  
 Rev. 2: 14, 20.  
 g Lev. 17: 14.

to send (them) to you. This was a courteous address of their authoritative letter. ¶ *With our beloved.* This was a most ample indorsement of *Barnabas and Paul*, as being held in the highest confidence by the Mother Church at Jerusalem. The Synod gives them all the weight of their authority as against the false teachers who claimed to be in high standing at Jerusalem. Barnabas is named first, as being best known as yet in Jerusalem. ¶ *Men.* The Apostles and Elders extol Paul and Barnabas as having surrendered (offered up) *their lives* (Rom. 12: 1,) in the Master's service, ch. 13: 50; 14: 19. This FIRST SYNOD gives a high commendation of their missionary work, and of their position as laborers among the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit has thus caused it to be placed on record, for the honor of these FIRST TWO FOREIGN MISSIONARIES of the Church, that they exposed their lives to imminent risk, and virtually offered them up in this cause—a pattern to all ministers and missionaries of Christ.

27. *We have sent* (as messengers—*apostled*—the verb corresponding with *Apostle*,) *Judas and Silas*, (from among ourselves, see vs. 22,) *also themselves telling by word* (of mouth) *the same things* which we have written in the letter to you, see vs. 32. As Paul and Barnabas were so publicly committed to this side of the question beforehand, their testimony was thus prudently confirmed by these special messengers, who should also answer any inquiries, and give all proper explanations. These were really sent from the Church at Jerusalem, but not those who so pretended, vs. 1.

22\*

28. The Synod not only speak for the Church, but they claim to act in accordance with the Holy Spirit, and with His authority. *For it seemed good—it is the authoritative sentiment, or sentence—same word as in vs. 22, 25.* ¶ *The Holy Ghost.* They were conscious of having arrived at their decision by the direction of the Holy Ghost, so that it was His Divine agency and authority going before, which led to their decision. The decree, therefore, which they send down was no invention of theirs. And they claimed no authority for their decrees, except so far as they were in conjunction with the Holy Ghost. This principle would settle the absurd claims of Church councils in the Papacy. ¶ *To lay—that no more* (further) *burden be imposed upon you, except these things necessarily* (imposed.) The necessity was to abstain from all idolatrous associations and practices; and from any thing that could even seem to put dishonor upon the blood of expiation. Their decree is founded on the necessity of the case.

29. Lit., *To abstain from idol offerings*, (see vs. 20.) Justin Martyr, living in the second century, writes, that Christians will undergo all torments and punishments, and even death itself, rather than either worship images or eat of things that are offered to them." ¶ *From which* (things) *preserving yourselves, ye shall do well*—what is most fit, and right, and peaceable, Eph. 6: 21; 2 Cor. 13: 11; ch. 10: 33; 3 John 6. The Church of Pergamos is reproached with having such among them, Rev. 1: 13. ¶ *Fare ye well.* This is the usual Greek form for a closing salutation in the writing



30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch; and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, <sup>h</sup>exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them.

33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles.

34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still.

35 <sup>k</sup>Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch,

of letters. It means, *be strong*—prevail; same as *valete* in the Latin. OBSERVE.—This was the action of THE FIRST SYNOD IN THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH. It fixed the doctrine and established the peace of the Church, and was a development of Church order, which is claimed as a pattern and warrant for Courts of Review and Control.

30. They, therefore, having been dismissed, (formally,) probably with religious services, vs. 33; 13: 3, and possibly with an escort for a part of the way—came to Antioch. Judas and Silas were the delegates of the Synod to the Church at Antioch, in connection with Paul and Barnabas, who had been sent up by this Church to the Synod. ¶ And having convened the multitude—the Church membership—the brethren. See vs. 12; 6: 2, the same term applied to the Church membership at Jerusalem. The epistle was addressed to the brethren, (vs. 23,) and to them they (the delegates) delivered the epistle, and having read (it) they (the Church members) rejoiced for the consolation—rather, confirmation (strengthening.) This term is kindred to that for “*Paraclete*,” which is rendered *Comforter*, from the old Latin term *confortari*, which means rather to *strengthen*. They rejoiced for the strengthening effect of this Synodical action, whereby they were freed from the burden of ritual observances as a ground of justification.

32. Judas and Silas, being prophets (inspired teachers,) also themselves, as well as Paul and Barnabas, (ch. 13: 1,)

and therefore competent to instruct, according to their instructions from the Synod, vs. 27, *exhorted* (in a consolatory and strengthening way,) the brethren (the Church) with many words, and confirmed (strengthened) them. See 14: 22, where the same words are used in different order.

33. Tarried—lit., *having made time*—having made some stay, or spent some time, they were dismissed (the same term as is used of their being sent away, vs. 30,) with peace, (with the salutations of “*peace*,” 16: 36; Mark 5: 34,) from the brethren of the Church at Antioch (back) to the Apostles, &c., at Jerusalem.

34. Lit., *But it seemed good*, (the same term as is used vs. 22, 25, 28, of the authoritative sentence of the Synod; and here, also, it may carry with it the idea of an authoritative decision, especially directed by the Spirit,)—that is, after they were formally dismissed by the Church, as their mission from Jerusalem was accomplished, Silas decided to remain still there in Antioch. Or it may easily be, that Silas returned to Antioch after going to Jerusalem, see vs. 40. From Gal. 2: 10, we learn that the Apostles required of Paul and Barnabas that in their Gentile missions they should remember the poor saints at Jerusalem, that thus those Gentile converts who were set free from the Jewish yoke, might not forget the wants and claims of the Mother Church.

35. Paul also and Barnabas spent (time) in Antioch (prior to their next

teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.

36 ¶ And some days after, Paul said unto Barnabas, Let us go again and visit our brethren <sup>in every city</sup> <sup>where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.</sup> <sup>1 ch. 13: 4, 13, 14, 51, and 14: 1 6, 24, 25.</sup>

37 And Barnabas determined to take with them <sup>John,</sup> <sup>whose surname was Mark.</sup> <sup>m. h. 12: 12, 25 and 13: 5. Col. 4: 10. 2 Tim. 4: 11. Phil. 24.</sup>

38 But Paul thought not good to take him with them, <sup>who departed from them from Pamphylia, and went not with them to the work.</sup> <sup>n ch. 13: 13.</sup>

39 And the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark, and sailed unto Cyprus;

40 And Paul chose Silas, and departed, <sup>being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God.</sup> <sup>o ch. 14: 26.</sup>

missionary journey, vs. 40,) *teaching and (particularly) evangelizing the word of the Lord*, (proclaiming it as glad tidings,) *with many others also*. Teachers and preachers became thus quite a distinction at Antioch as the Mother Church of Gentile Christendom—the Church of progress and universality—the missionary Church looking to the evangelizing of the globe. (h. 13: 1. A Church of large aims, and a missionary spirit will have men raised up for the great work.

‡ 25. PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (WITH SILAS.)—*Europe*—MACEDONIAN VISION. A. D. 51. Chs. 15: 36 to 16: 10.

36. Literally, *after some* (not many) *days*. Some suppose that during this interval, Peter and Paul had their dissension at Antioch, Gal. 2: 11, and Barnabas was led away by the dissimulation. But the time seems rather short for this, and such a dissension here scarcely accords with the prompt setting out of Paul and Barnabas together. See vs. 28, in the case of Mark. ¶ *Let us go*. Literally, *turning back now, let us visit* (oversee) *our brethren, &c., in every city, how they hold* (themselves.) ¶ *Where we have preached, &c.* Literally, *announced*, as a first attempt.

37. *Determined* (rather, *planned*—*had a mind*) *to take with him Mark,*

who was his cousin. Col. 4: 10. *But Paul thought fit not to take with him this one who departed, &c.* See ch. 13: 13. In Paul's judgment, Mark had shown a spirit in some way unbecoming a missionary for such a field as theirs.

39. *The contention*. Literally, *there arose, therefore, a paroxysm*—a sharp excitement—a provocation which, in the end, was a provocation to love and to good works, Heb. 10: 24, and it was overruled also to the increase of laborers and an extension of the missionary field, *so as that they departed asunder* (were separated) *from one another*, as Abraham and Lot. Gen. 13: 9. (This indicates their separation as to their route, but not any hostile rupture.) “It was an eager dispute between Paul persuading what was more just, and Barnabas desiring what was more kind.” And so (so that) *Barnabas taking Mark, sailed unto Cyprus*—which was the native country of Barnabas, where also Mark had his relatives. This is the last mention of Barnabas in the Acts.

40. *But Paul having chosen Silas* (for himself) *departed*—(went forth on the missionary tour,) *having been committed by the brethren unto the grace of God*. This does not imply that Barnabas was not so commended, as Luke confines himself to his object of narrating Paul's movements. There may be an

p ch. 16: 5.

41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, <sup>p</sup> confirming the churches.

## CHAPTER XVI.

a ch. 14: 6.

b ch. 19: 22.  
Rom. 16: 21.  
1 Cor. 4: 17.  
Phil. 2: 19.  
1 Thess. 3: 2.  
1 Tim. 1: 2.  
2 Tim. 1: 2.  
c 2 Tim. 1: 5.  
d ch. 6: 3.

1 THEN came he to <sup>a</sup> Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, <sup>b</sup> named Timotheus, <sup>c</sup> the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father *was* a Greek:

2 Which <sup>d</sup> was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

e 1 Cor. 9: 20.  
Gal. 2: 3.  
See Gal. 5: 2.

3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and <sup>e</sup> took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

intimation that the Church rather sided with Paul.

41. *Through Syria and Cilicia*—according to their commission from the Apostles and Elders. See vs. 23. ¶ *Confirming—strengthening*. The same term as is used in vs. 32. Paul is named alone, as being head and leader, and Luke has it for his object to narrate Paul's labors. Going from Antioch, the capital of Syria, into Asia Minor, he would naturally go to Cilicia, whose capital was Tarsus, and in both these districts he had planted Churches doubtless before. See vs. 23, notes. He probably confirmed or strengthened the Churches mainly in regard to this great doctrine lately settled by the Synod, as the Synodical letter issued and sent down to the Churches was addressed to these districts by name. This second missionary journey of Paul thus commenced A.D. 51, (spring,) terminated A. D. 54, (autumn.) Ch. 18, 22.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1. On this second missionary journey from Antioch, Paul's object was to deliver the decrees of the Synod to these Churches according to his instructions, and to confirm them in the truth, as Judaizing teachers had endeavored to turn them aside. He passed through Syria in the neighborhood of Antioch, the capital; and then through Cilicia, where he would feel more at home among his native hills.

But not remaining there, he came into the provinces farther west, where he had experienced the most grievous treatment at the instance of the false teachers. *Derbe and Lystra* are named, though he most probably visited Iconium and Antioch in Pisidia also. A most important item in the history here, is the meeting with *Timothy*, i. e., at Lystra, as it would seem—which was probably his birth place, see ch. 20: 4, though some suppose it was Derbe, and others that he was born at the former, and was now living at the latter. He was *the son of a certain woman*, (Eunice, 2 Tim. 1: 5,) of eminent piety, as was also his grandmother, Lois. ¶ *A Jewess which believed*. She was a Christian convert from Judaism. Timothy was also a *Disciple*, or Christian convert. Paul calls him *my son in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 4: 17; 1 Tim. 1: 2; 2 Tim. 1: 2. He had been early made familiar with the sacred Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3: 14, and had probably been converted on Paul's first visit, ch. 14: 7. ¶ *But his father was a Greek*, and probably a heathen, possibly a proselyte. This was expressly mentioned to show how Timothy was of mixed origin, and related to both Jews and Gentiles. Lystra was an idolatrous city, without a Jewish synagogue. Ch. 14: 9.

2, 3. *Which*. That is, *Timothy*, was witnessed to, 1 Tim. 1: 18. He was set apart for the work of the ministry, "by the laying on of the hands of the pres-

4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, <sup>ch. 15:22, 23.</sup> that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

5 And <sup>ch. 15:41.</sup> so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

bytery," 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6, after he had "made a good confession before many witnesses," 1 Tim. 6:12, and his labors are here doubtless referred to in Lystra and Iconium. It was for this public testimony doubtless that Paul would have him (wished him) to go forth with him, on his missionary tour. ¶ *Took and circumcised.* This rite could be performed by any Israelite. This was no abandonment of his fixed principle, that they who contended for circumcision, as necessary for salvation, forsook the Gospel of Christ. It was a step which he judged expedient for Timothy's greatest usefulness. 1 Cor. 10:23. As the son of a Gentile, he would be a fit fellow laborer among the Gentiles, while as circumcised because of his mother's being a Jewess, he would conciliate the Jews, who would otherwise avoid him and regard him as a heathen like his father. 1 Cor. 9:22. It was not Timothy that sought circumcision, as in order to salvation, but Paul circumcised him, that thus this young disciple might better serve him in his missionary work. "Just as I myself, (says Luther,) if I were about to preach the Gospel among the Jews, should be willing and ready to submit to circumcision, and to eat and abstain, as they did." It was not circumcision that was sinful, but the trusting to it. In the case of Titus, both whose parents were Gentiles, Paul would not concede the point, as there was no such Jewish connection in his case.

4. *As they went—passed through.* So far as can be gathered from the history, Timothy is the first Gentile convert who appears as a regular missionary. ¶ *Cities.* Lystra, Derbe, Antioch and Iconium. ¶ *They deliver-*

*ed (to) them the decrees—(dogmas, as the term is, ch. 14:22,)—authoritative decisions—to keep. Literally, to guard. ¶ Ordained.* They were *δὲγματα*, dogmas—decided upon, determined by the Synod. These Synodical decisions were not merely advisory, but judicial, and were sent down to the Churches as the authoritative action of this Court of Review and Control.

5. *And so. Literally, therefore, &c.* So then, as a consequence of this missionary movement, together with the settlement of the vexed question—the Churches were settled in the faith, (this point of doctrine being fixed, and the proper views of Christian truth being established, so that they were no longer weakened by this dissension and controversy,) and increased in the number (of their members) daily. *Observe.*—The great advantage of such a Court of Jesus Christ as can authoritatively settle for the Churches a question in dispute. The truth of God is thus conserved, and the unity and peace of the Churches is maintained, and the assaults of errorists are defeated. Ministers of Christ should be held responsible for the doctrines they preach, no less than members for the doctrines they receive, else dangerous error may any time corrupt the Churches.

6. *Now.* The preceding verse may be taken either as the close of the former paragraph, or as the opening of this. The journey of these missionaries would be in a northeast direction from Antioch or Iconium to Phrygia. This district was not a separate province, but a tract of country in the central part of Asia Minor not clearly defined, though bounded by Galatia and Bithynia. There were sixty-two cities in this region. Many Jews settled here.

7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia :  
but the Spirit suffered them not.

2 Cor. 2:12.  
2 Tim. 4:13.

8 And they passing by Mysia <sup>h</sup> came down to Troas.

1 ch. 10:30.

9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night ; There  
stood a <sup>h</sup> man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come  
over into Macedonia, and help us.

in the time of the Maccabees ; and Paul planted Churches in the chief cities, as Laodicea, Colosse, and Hieropolis. To the Colossians he wrote afterwards an Epistle. ¶ *Galatia*. Othorwise called, *Gallo-Grecia*, formerly included in Phrygia, but settled by the Gauls and Celts, of German origin, in the third century before Christ, who mixed with the Greeks, and were called Gallo-Grecians. They retained the German language in Jerome's time, and Paul's letter to the Churches of this province might be called a letter to the Germans, and the great expounder of it is the German *Luther*. But the Greek was also extensively spoken among them. This province was evangelized by Paul, and as he finds disciples here on his third missionary journey, (ch. 18 : 23,) we know that he must have planted Churches here at his first visit, Gal. 1 : 2 ; 4 : 13, 14. "The Churches of Galatia" he addresses in his Epistle, and they were remarkable for their devoted affection toward him, even so that they would have plucked out their eyes for him, &c., (Gal. 4 : 15.) ¶ *Forbidden—restrained*. Either by inward revelation, or by a word of prophecy, they were hindered now from preaching in *Proconsular Asia*, which comprised Ionia, of which Ephesus was the capital. Here the Gospel was afterwards preached with great success, and Paul wrote an Epistle to the Ephesians. Mysia was included in this province. Hence we find them, (vs. 7,) when they come to Mysia, passing it by. Lydia and Caria were also included.

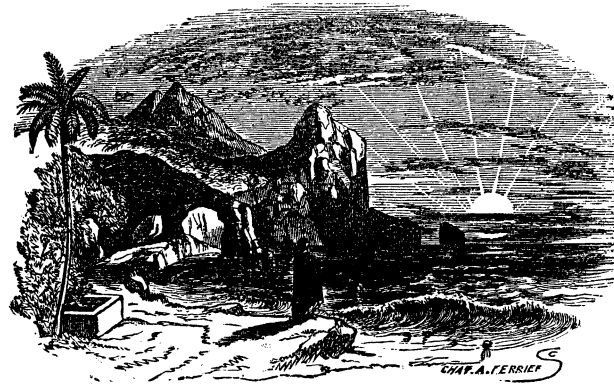
7, 8. From Phrygia they went east to Galatia, thence southwest through the north part of Phrygia down to the frontier of Mysia. Being restrained by the Holy Spirit here, they *assayed—attempted to go into Bithynia*, adjoining

Mysia, where they were again forbidden. Thence they *passed by* Mysia, so far as regards preaching, though they passed through it to *Troas*, a city four miles distant from ancient Troy, with an important harbor. ¶ *Bithynia*. This was the Roman province where Pliny the younger was proconsul at the opening of the second century. About A. D. 102 he wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan, inquiring what should be done with the Christians, who were so fast multiplying in that province as to cause the desertion of the temples, and to threaten the utter downfall of the State religion. He gives, also, such an account of the Christian faith and practice, as enables us to identify the same Christianity which we now profess as embraced then, and witnessed with blood. And inasmuch as the missionaries did not go into Bithynia, we must infer that the Gospel spread thither from Galatia, in that wonderful progress which so distinguished it in the first three centuries. In this province Peter labored very successfully afterwards, 1 Pet. 1 : 1.

9. It is plain from this narrative that the Spirit had restrained the missionaries from tarrying now in Asia, just in order that they might hasten at once to Europe. ¶ *A vision*—the same as in the case of Cornelius, ch. 10 : 3—*appeared*—lit., *was seen by Paul*. This was not a dream, but a supernatural apparition to convey to him important truth. *There was a certain man, a Macedonian, standing beseeching him, and saying*. That the man was from Macedonia was made apparent to Paul as part of the vision, whether this was by his language, or dress, or declaration, or by inward revelation. ¶ *Come over*. Lit., *Having crossed over*—viz., the north part of the *Ægean Sea*—*help us*—Macedonians. This was

10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go <sup>into</sup> Macedonia, assuredly gathering <sup>2 Cor. 1:12.</sup> that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;



the part of Europe nearest to the seaport of Troas; and the man appeared as the representative of the Great Western nations. He thus "makes the confession that the highest splendor of heathendom, which we must recognize in the arts of Greece and in the polity and imperial power of Rome, had arrived at the end of all its resources."

10. *We endeavored—we sought*—by seeking a ship. The historian Luke here first introduces himself as one of the missionary company. There seems little doubt that Luke here joined them, (some think as Paul's physician, see Col. 4:10, and refer to the frequent intimation of his shattered health, Gal. 4:13, 14; 2 Cor. 12:7,) perhaps as a missionary physician. At vs. 17 to ch. 20:6, the use of the first person is dropped, and it is hence inferred that Luke remained at Philippi, where he leaves off the "*we*" in the narrative. At ch. 21:17 to 27:1, he drops the "*we*," simply because

he is speaking of Paul alone. ¶ *Assuredly gathering*. By consultation and comparison of views, they came unanimously to the conclusion, *that the Lord Jesus Christ had called them* by His providence and Spirit, *to evangelize them*. And for the first time the Gospel was to be carried, in accordance with this Divine intimation of an exploring world, from Asia across the boundary, to Europe, on its way to Rome.

26. THE FIRST CHURCH IN EUROPE, (Philippi) — LYDIA — (Pythoress) — IMPRISONMENT AND MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE OF PAUL AND SILAS — (Sailor.) Ch. 16:11–40.

11. *Loosing—setting off*—putting to sea. (Same as ch. 13:13.) ¶ *Straight course*—without tacking—implying a fair wind from the south. "Ran right before the wind," 21:1. The voyage in the opposite direction took five days, ch. 20:6. *Samothrace* is on the coast of Thrace, not far from Troas, now

<sup>2</sup> Phil. 1:1.  
<sup>1</sup> Or, *the first*.

12 And from thence to <sup>1</sup>Philippi, which is || the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony; and we were in that city abiding certain days.

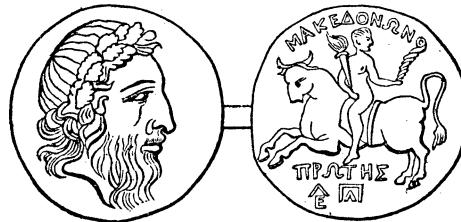
<sup>†</sup> Gr. *sabbath day*.

13 And on the <sup>†</sup>sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted *thither*.

called Samothraki. *Neapolis* is about sixty-five miles distant north-west, on the coast of Macedonia. It was the port to Philippi, as Seleucia was to Antioch, or the Piræus to Athens.

12. *And from thence*—immediately to *Philippi*, about ten miles distant from Neapolis. Here was Paul's first Church in Europe. (See Epis. Phil.) ¶ *The chief city*. Rather, *first city of the Macedonian portion of the district*. Here is one of the many instances in which Luke's narrative is corroborated,

in the minutest details, by the secular history of the time—showing, apart from its claims to Divine inspiration, how the authority of the book as a historical document can be established. That Philippi was a “first city” of the province, is implied in its being a “colony.” And the Roman coins of Philippi are still extant from the time of Augustus to that of Caracalla. One of these is inscribed, “*Of the Macedonians of the first*.” Some understand that as Neapolis properly



belonged to Thrace, (of the empire.) Philippi was the first Macedonian city to which the missionaries came, and that this is the sense here; but we may rather take it to mean a chief city, in distinction from Neapolis which was inferior. Wisdom “now was to utter her voice in the city,” in the chief place of concourse, within the great Western empire of the world. (Proverbs 1:2.) ¶ *A colony*. The Roman colonies were populated by Roman citizens who had all the civil privileges of Rome itself, and voted at Rome. They were in fact extensions of the capital to the provinces. They were governed by their own senate and magistrates. Some had even their land freed from tribute, and this was the favored case with Philippi. Veteran soldiers and freed-men were commonly the colonists. The fact of

Philippi being a colony, will explain what occurred, vs. 37, 38, where it became important to plead the rights of Roman citizenship. ¶ *And we were in this city spending some days*—probably some weeks. See vs. 16, 18. Philippi was already a representative of Rome and the Great West, and in so far it was contemplated by the Macedonian cry.

13. *On the Sabbath*—the Saturday after arrival—we departed outside of the city, by a river—the small stream running by Philippi, called Gangites, which emptied into the Strymon, some miles off. ¶ *Where prayer* (or a meeting for prayer) *was wont to be*. The custom of the Philippian Jews was to assemble in this place, outside of the city, either because the law excluded their religious assemblies from the city, as the term would intimate, or

14 ¶ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose <sup>m</sup> heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things <sup>m</sup> Luke 24:45. which were spoken of Paul.

15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And <sup>n</sup> she constrained *us*. <sup>n</sup> Gen. 19:3, and 33:11. Judges 19:21. Luke 24:29. Heb. 13:2.

because they preferred the locality on the river side for the convenience of Jewish allusions. The term for *prayer* is understood by some of a *prayer-house*, or *prayer-hall*, but like the term *meeting*, in English, it is used both in the sense of worship and place of worship. No building needs be supposed here. The locality is the river-side. *Where there was accustomed to be a prayer meeting*. See vs. 16. The term for "*was wont*"—rendered often *was supposed*—is also used in regard to customs which have the force of law—the noun derived from this verb meaning *law*. There seems to have been no synagogue, and only a few Jews at Philippi. ¶ *Sat down*. And having sat down, we discoursed to the women which came together for prayer. The worshipers were chiefly, if not exclusively, women, and usually, in Jewish worship, the men are separated from the women. See ch. 17:4, 12. This was a female prayer meeting. So was Queen Esther's. (See Esther 4:16.)

14. *Lydia*. This woman was Paul's FIRST CONVERT IN ALL EUROPE. Her name, Lydia, was a common one, and was the name also of the province in which she lived. She was a *seller of purple* dyes or cloths, the rich color obtained from a shell fish. This trade is mentioned by Homer, as celebrated in the neighborhood of Thyatira. The art is still practiced there. An inscription has been found there purporting to have been made by the craft of *dyers*. The city was on the borders of Lydia and Mysia, and situated between Pergamos and Sardis. Lydia was still a resident there, as we infer, though sojourning then for her trade at Philippi. She is spoken of as *worshipping God*—one who attended, at least, on

the worship of the true God, and probably a proselyte, though not necessarily. She *heard*—*was hearing us*. *Whose heart the Lord* (Jesus Christ by His Spirit) *opened*—implying that it was shut by nature against the truth, and that it required the Almighty power of the Risen Lord to open it. Every disposition to receive the truth must come from God only. Here it was, in some respects most remarkable. The result was *that she attended*—rather, *gave heed—to the things discoursed* by Paul. "The Spirit of God maketh the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners."

15. *Was baptized*. This is the first time in the history of Paul's mission among the Gentiles that BAPTISM is spoken of. And here the *baptism of Lydia's household along with herself*, is mentioned as matter of course, and as though it was the practice, which would readily be understood without explanation. It was not said that they believed, and therefore were baptized. Only her own believing is spoken of, and then, as if it followed immediately from this, the baptism of her household and of herself together is recorded. But the ordinance of Infant Baptism does not rest for its authority on mere inferences, however clear, but on the great principle of the unity of both dispensations, having the same covenant of grace and only a change in the seal. Unless the covenant, under the New Dispensation, included the infant offspring also, its benefits would have been far fewer and more restricted than under the Old, and the Jew would reasonably have complained that his household was cut off. But we hear of no such complaint. The Apostles,



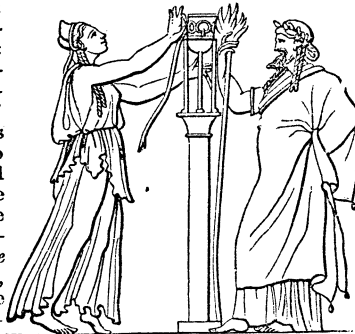
16 ¶ And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel <sup>o 1 Sam. 28:7.</sup> possessed with a spirit <sup>|| Or, of Python.</sup> of divination met us, which brought her masters <sup>ch. 19:24.</sup> much gain by soothsaying.

17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

as Jews, would have administered baptism to the children of believers *as matter of course*, and converts would have expected it and claimed it for their households. So the practice would obtain uniformly and without any command, as we find it did obtain in the early Church, without doubt. Peter is therefore forward to proclaim this household feature at Pentecost, ch. 3: 17, 39. (See in case of the jailor's family, (vs. 33,) that of Stephanas, 1 Cor. 1: 16; ch. 21: 4; 1 Cor. 7: 14.) The controversy about circumcision, and the decision of it by the Synod, involved of course the whole ordinance, and its application to children, as well as to parents. And if that was dispensed with and supplanted by baptism in the case of adults, why not also in the case of infants, unless otherwise advertised. ¶ *If ye—if indeed—or, since ye have judged me faithful to the Lord*, as implied by their application of the covenant seal. ¶ *She constrained—compelled*—by an urgency that compelled their assent. She, in a manner, forced them to accept her free hospitality, during their stay at Philippi, in spite of any reluctance or hesitancy they may have shown. **OBSERVE.**—(1) Her faith works by love; and as she has opportunity she does good to the household of faith. (2) This Christian family is the foundation already laid of the first Christian Church in Europe, under Paul's missionary labors. Paul (and Timothy) addressed an Epistle to this Church, ten or eleven years after this, when he was imprisoned at Rome, (Philip. 1: 1.) The "*strangers of Rome*" (ch. 2: 10,) may have carried the Gospel to Rome, and planted the Church there.

16. Here again is a *conflict with heathenism*, as before, ch. 8: 13. They took up their abode with Lydia, and

taught habitually in the place of prayer. So *it came to pass*—literally, *it became*—or occurred, *as we went* (journeyed) *to prayer*—or, unto the place of prayer, probably on another Sabbath. ¶ *Damsel*—female servant, (see ch. 12: 13; Matt. 26: 69.) This maid was a slave. She *had* (possessed) *a spirit of divination*. Literally, of *Py-*



*thon*—like that ascribed to the Pythoness at Delphi. She was an instance of demoniacal possession—possessed of an evil spirit, as is plain from Paul's address to the spirit as a personal tenant of the woman, (vs. 18.) She *afforded to her* (joint) *owners much gain* (by) *divining*—telling fortunes.

17. *This same* (maid) *following close'y Paul and us*, kept crying out, *These men, &c.* She thus bore testimony to the Divine mission of "these men"—Silas, Timothy, Luke and Paul. Evil spirits did thus testify to the Saviour, Matt. 8: 29, perhaps always in a forced way and reluctantly. ¶ *Servants—bondsmen*. ¶ *Shew*. Literally, *announce* (proclaim) *to us the way of salvation*. Christ declared Himself to be *the way*. (John 14: 6.) "*Neither is there salvation in any other.*" (Ch. 4: 12.) *The*

18 And this did she many days. But Paul, <sup>¶ See Mark 1: 25, 34.</sup> being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. <sup>¶ Mark 16: 17.</sup> And he came out the same hour.

19 ¶ And <sup>¶ ch. 19: 25, 26.</sup> when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, <sup>¶ 2 Cor. 6: 5.</sup> they caught Paul and Silas, and <sup>¶ Matt. 10: 18.</sup> drew them into the <sup>¶ Or, court.</sup> marketplace unto the rulers,

20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, <sup>¶ 1 Kings 18: 14.</sup> do exceedingly trouble our city, <sup>ch. 17: 6.</sup>

21 And teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

ministers of Christ delivered the Gospel message which points the way of salvation by faith in Christ as our Prophet, Priest and King.

18. The Apostle suffered this to go on *many days*. But at length he was pained and annoyed at this testimony from the realm of darkness, lest he might seem to be in concert with it, and especially since paganism wrought by such spirits as these against the kingdom of Christ. He could have nothing to do, therefore, with this demoniacal agency. See Mark 1: 34. He addressed the spirit; which proves that it was a personal agent distinct from the woman herself. His *command* was *in the name of Jesus Christ*, by virtue of His authority, and not by any might of his own, (ch. 3: 16.) This personal demon was thus miraculously cast out, and it was at the word—the *same hour*—immediately. So our Lord's miracle with the nobleman's son. See John 4: 58.

19. *Her masters*. The effect of this miracle upon the joint owners of this possessed slave might have been predicted. They were getting gain from her divinations, fortune-telling, &c., and when they saw from what was done, *that the hope of their gain was gone*—was departed, with the evil spirit of divination—*seizing Paul and Silas*, (who were manifestly the leaders,) *they drew them* (there is a stronger word for *dragged*,) *into the market place*, (forum, where the courts were held,) *before the rulers*, the general term for the authorities. NOTE.—Even the devils are subject to the Apostles, through Christ's name.

(Luke 10: 17.) They even give a testimony here, however forced, to the Divine authority of the Gospel.

20. *And bringing them to the magistrates*. The term here is peculiar, and designates the Roman prætors, (*στρατηγούς*,) showing that Philippi was a *colony*, as stated vs. 12; and showing, also, why Luke mentions the fact there, to prepare for this statement here. As the Roman government of Philippi was noted at the beginning, so the features of the Roman constitution are brought to view throughout the narrative as here. ¶ *Being Jews*. The Jews were the most hated of all people by the Romans, and the owners sought to take advantage of this prejudice to stir up popular enmity against them. Ch. 18: 2; Gal. 2: 14. The accusation was of a public nature, when really the interest was a private one. The outcry was, that they were disturbers of the peace; like the charge against our Lord, that he was a traitor. Luke 22: 66–71.

21. *Teach customs*—religious usages. The Romans were understood as tolerating foreign religions—so long, at least, as they were privately and quietly held without proselyting; and for some years the Christians were regarded with contempt as being only a petty, feeble Jewish sect. But presently the rapid progress of Christianity threatened to empty their temples, and to subvert the religion of the State, as when Pliny the younger wrote from Bithynia, A. D. 102, to the Roman Emperor, Trajan, to know what he should do with these amazing numbers of

22 And the multitude rose up together against them :  
v 2 Cor. 6:5.  
 and 11:23, 25.  
 1 Thess. 2:2. and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded  
 to beat them.

23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them,  
 they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely :

24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the  
 inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25 ¶ And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises  
 unto God : and the prisoners heard them.

Christians. Then the Roman rulers became more alarmed. Besides, Judaism, of which Christianity was considered only a sect, was interdicted by law for the Romans, as Protestantism is in Papal Rome for Italians. The Jews were hated and driven out of the city repeatedly. Christianity took no public stand of direct hostility to the Roman religion as such; yet it was seen to be calculated by its opposite institutions and contrary principles, to overthrow it. And hence the grievous and cruel persecutions of the Church in the first centuries. ¶ *Being Romans*—colonists, vs. 12. This is intended to stand in contrast with the former terms, "*being Jews*," with a contrast also in the word rendered *being*, which, in that former case, implies something foreign and blameworthy, perhaps, while in this latter case it is something essential and familiar. The introduction of new gods was forbidden by the laws of Rome.

22. *The multitude*—the populace, who were affected by this appeal to the popular prejudice—*rose up together* with the accusers, as well as in mass, and the magistrates—prætors—Roman officers—*tore off their clothes*. (i. e. of Paul and Silas,) violently stripped them naked, so that they might be beaten according to custom, and they ordered their attendants to beat them, (literally, with rods.) This is the only instance that is recorded out of the three times when Paul was beaten. 2 Cor. 11:25. The tumult and hasty violence seems to have prevented them from claiming their rights as Roman citizens.

23. *And when they* (the officers just now commanded to do so,) *had laid*

*many stripes upon them*. The number was not limited, as by the Mosaic law, to thirty-nine stripes. Paul refers to this, 2 Cor. 11:23: "in stripes above measure." See Deut. 25:3. Some suppose that the magistrates themselves beat them, and thrust them into the prison, but this does not appear to be the sense.

24. *Who*. The jailor acted according to his orders, and afterwards became a sincere disciple, vs. 32, &c. *The inner prison*—was the interior ward, between which and the entrance there were several gates. (See ch. 12:10.) Some of the Roman prisons were subterranean. I saw the Mamertine prison at Rome, in which State prisoners were commonly confined. It is an excavation in the solid rock, two stories deep, with an opening in the stone floor to let down the prisoner. ¶ *The stocks* were heavy frames of wood opening so as to let the feet in, and often set so far apart as to stretch the limbs most painfully—used as an instrument of torture. Tertullian says, "the leg feels nothing in the stocks, when the mind is in heaven."

25. Yet, at midnight—in the dreariest hour of their imprisonment—they, *praying sang praises*—literally, *hymned* (to) God. Their devotions consisted of prayer and praise together. It was not prayer alone, but thanksgiving also, which is so remarkable in such case. While they were praying, they were also singing praises to God. This may have been the musical utterance of Psalms in prayer, according to the Jewish custom of chanting from the Old Testament Psalms, or it may have been as the Spirit gave them utterance,

26 \* And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that <sup>\* ch. 4: 31.</sup> the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately \* all the doors were opened, and every one's bands <sup>a ch. 5: 19, and 12: 7-10.</sup> were loosed.

27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

"in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." *And the prisoners heard* (were testifying to) *them*—from the outer apartments of the prison. Nothing but the grace of God in the heart, and the power of this religion in the life, could account for such triumph in affliction.

26. *Suddenly*—while they were singing, &c.—*there was a great earthquake*—a token of the Divine presence and power interfering in their case, in answer to the prayer, ch. 4: 31. Though an earthquake is in itself no miracle, this was plainly a miraculous transaction altogether, as nothing less would account for the fact that *every one's bands were loosed*—that is, their fetters, stocks, &c., by which they were bound, were unloosed; not only of the two chief prisoners, but of every one in the prison. What an impression this must have made upon these who were just now listening to the devotions of Paul and Silas, to hear this supernatural crash, and how certainly must they have associated it with a Divine interposition.

27. *The keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, (becoming awake,) and seeing* (from where he stood, and on further search,) *the prison doors opened, having drawn a sword*—probably the sword he wore as a Roman officer, *was about to kill himself*—in terror of the penalty which awaited him by the Roman law in case, *as he supposed, that the prisoners had escaped.* He would have been liable to the same doom which they would have suffered. Ch. 12: 19.

24\*

Suicide was common among the heathen of that day; and it was rather approved than condemned by their philosophers; and in this very city Brutus and Cassius, who were regarded as models of virtue, had both of them committed suicide not long before. Where Christianity has little power, even in Christian lands, suicide more or less prevails. Where the views of a future state are unscriptural—where the annihilation or the salvation of the wicked is taught, suicide is encouraged. Christ has brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel.

28. Paul either stood where he could see the jailor in this act, or where he could hear some exclamation from him, intimating his purpose, or he was prompted to cry out by special revelation. See ch. 27: 24. ¶ *Do thyself no harm*—evil, to soul and body. Paul understood the jailor's fears, as we see from his remark, *for we are all here,* and not fled, as the jailor feared. Paul may have had a revelation of this fact, as he had at the shipwreck, ch. 27: 24. How many of these prisoners were given him as fruits of this prison-preaching is not told us; but doubtless some, and possibly all. We are never placed in such circumstances of trial but we may preach Christ.

29. *And having called for a light,* (literally, *lights*)—torch-lights which he could carry in each hand. The whole house was aroused (vs. 33,) *he rushed in*—the inner prison, *and becoming tremulous,* (or coming to be in a tre-

<sup>d</sup> Luke 3:10,  
ch. 2:37. and  
9:6.

<sup>c</sup> John 3:16, 36,  
and 6:47.  
<sup>1</sup> John 5:10.

30 And brought them out, and said, <sup>b</sup>Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

31 And they said, <sup>c</sup>Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

mor.) He was smitten in his conscience, doubtless, and impressed with the evidence of a Divine interposition, as he must have known something of the grounds on which Paul and Silas were imprisoned. ¶ *He fell down before—to—or at their feet.* This shows how he must have regarded them as the occasion of all this miraculous work, and the declared favorites and friends of God, though he had so lately put them into the closest, most severe confinement. OBSERVE.—(1) The judgments of God may well alarm the wicked.

30. *Brought them out*—literally, *leading them forth outside*—from the inner to the outer ward or apartment of the prison—and said, *Sirs*. This term expresses his high respect. *Masters*—and applied in the singular to Christ—*Lord*. ¶ *What, &c.* Literally, *what is it necessary that I should do in order that I may be saved*. Some suppose that he inquired how he could be saved from the dreaded penalty of unfaithfulness to his trust. But as the prisoners had not escaped, he had nothing to fear from this quarter. Besides, he asks this question, not in the first frenzy of his fear, but after he had taken them to the outer prison. His inquiry doubtless related to the salvation of his soul. He had most likely heard of the Gospel doctrines from them. And it is clear from their reply that the Apostles so understood his question. The damsel (vs. 17,) had spoken of these men as sent from God to show to us “the way of salvation,” and this came to be the public rumor of their work. So the public charge against them was that they taught customs (religious usages,) contrary to those of the heathen, (vs. 21,) viz. to turn from idols to the living God. It is plain that his heart had been prompted to this inquiry by the Holy Spirit. This is the substance of every awa-

kened sinner's inquiry. “How shall I obtain salvation,” such as God gives, from sin, and death, and hell. This inquiry for salvation implies a sense of impending danger, and of a coming destruction.

31. *Believe, &c.* This is the substance of every true Gospel answer to this inquiry, and it applies equally to every case. It points to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to His finished work, as the only hope of the sinner, and directs to a simple faith in Him as the only means of salvation. ¶ *And thy house*. Here again it is the *household covenant* that is set forth, according to the original terror of it as spoken to Abraham, “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.” Gen. 17:7. *Thou shalt be saved* (emphatic) *and thy house*, as directly connected with this (in the promise.) The faith of the jailor would put his household into covenant relations, and would give them the advantage of the household ordinance and promises, according to the Abrahamic covenant. It is not a satisfactory explanation of this clause to say that salvation was open to his family on the same terms as to himself, for it was also open to all the Philippians and to the whole human family on the same plan. But it is plain that the Apostle refers to the household covenant on the basis of which Lydia's family were baptized along with her and on her faith, (vss. 14, 15,) and Zachæus' house became, in a sense, partakers of the salvation, even as he was in the Gospel sense, a son of Abraham. Luke 19:9, “For the promise is unto you and to your children.” (Ch. 2:39.) OBSERVE.—(1) *That day* salvation came to that house. (2) How can any parent neglect this salvation when he sees his family so seriously involved in the consequences of his conduct. Even without the household plan of God, the parent must naturally, more

32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their stripes*; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

34 And when he had brought them into his house, <sup>d Luke 5: 29, and 19: 6.</sup> he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

or less, carry his children along with him in the course which he takes. (3) Here is the first *express inquiry* for salvation that we read of in this history, from the mouth of an idolatrous Gentile, (vs. 30.)

32. Paul and Silas immediately *spake* (discoursed familiarly) *unto him*, (the jailor,) and to all that were in the house, *the word of the Lord*—the Gospel of his salvation by Jesus Christ, for “how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard?” “Luke couples faith with preaching and doctrine.”—*Calvin*. “All thought of bodily comfort and repose was postponed to the work of saving the soul. The meaning of faith was explained,” and the nature and purport of the ordinances. Their preaching to all that were in the house proves nothing as to whether there were young children there or not. If there were such present as could not understand for themselves, they would be reached through the parents, as they were also interested in the results, and they would be baptized on the parent’s faith. The narrative introduces the household (as in the case of Lydia,) as though they were involved in the parent’s act. “Thou shalt be saved *and thy house*,” vs. 31. “And when she was baptized *and her household*,” vs. 15. “*And was baptized, he and all his*,” vs. 33, just as we should expect on the supposition that the household covenant is implied.

33. *Took*. Literally, *receiving*—*taking them (with him)* out of the inner prison, to the fountain or well, which commonly belonged to both private and public houses, and *the same hour of the night*, (literally, *in that very hour*,) so prompt was he now in alleviating the cruelties done to them—*and washed (off) their stripes*. The

term here refers to an entire washing, but such as could be done with little water or much, nothing being implied in regard to the quantity. If the meaning be to bathe, it is the stripes that were bathed, perhaps more exactly than washed. ¶ *And was baptized*. The service he had just done them indicated his cordial acceptance of the salvation which they proclaimed. Faith without works is dead. New-born faith and hope and love work often in tender regard for the Gospel messengers. All the circumstances favor the belief that this baptizing, in the confines of the prison and at midnight, must have been by sprinkling or pouring, and not by immersion. ¶ *He and all his*. The baptism of the household is spoken of as connected with his baptism, and belonging to it, as a proper appendage, while nothing is said, as yet, of any act of theirs, implying personal faith. See vs. 34, note.

34. *Brought*. Rather, *having brought them up into his house*, which was probably an upper story of the prison buildings, and “the inner prison” may have been underground—he *set meat before them*—literally, *he spread a table before (them) and rejoiced with all his house, having believed in God*, or, *that he had believed in God*. This is a striking expression. The whole household was interested in his act, and they all had reason for rejoicing. It was a happy house, like that of Zaccheus, made glad by reason of salvation having come to that house. He rejoiced with all his house as one who believed in God. OBSERVE.—(1) True piety is the light of a dwelling, the source of their most lasting comfort and happiness. (2) Parental piety makes a household blessed. Family religion is

35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us ch. 22:25. openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

instituted; the family altar is set up; the household covenant is embraced with its precious seals, and the blessing of Abraham comes on the family. (3) What an incentive to parents to give themselves to God, when the eternal interests of their children are so involved in their acts. (4) What a change, as in the case of the jailor, from spiritual ignorance and impenitence, to the tender, believing, loving service of God before his household and the world. "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham." (Luke 19:9.)

35, 36. While the jailor was thus thoroughly changed in his feeling toward the missionary prisoners, the magistrates were moved to release them; whether it was by the earthquake, or by their own conscience, upon calmer reflection, does not appear. Probably both had to do with it, and it was so ordered in God's plan. ¶ *The serjeants* here mentioned, are literally *rod-bearers*—lictors—who in the colonies carried *staves* before the magistrates as their insignia of office. These had orders to *release those men*. This could scarcely have been the plan of the magistrates at first, since the prisoners were thrust into the inner prison with an air of security. The now converted jailor who had so recently obeyed the orders to imprison them, most gladly announces to them these orders for their release; not doubting, probably, that they would most cheerfully and eagerly go forth from their confinement.

37. It is thought by some that the "serjeants" or lictors came into the

prison with the jailor, or else found the prisoners in the jailor's house, for it seems that Paul addressed them. But the jailor *reported* their saying to Paul, and possibly the jailor also reported Paul's answer to the lictors. Else we may suppose that the lictors, following the jailor, made their appearance to the prisoners immediately after their message had been delivered. ¶ *Beaten*. Literally, *skinned*—*flayed*. This was the severity of the scourging. Next, it was done *openly*—publicly—and their release should be as publicly done as their imprisonment had been, and not *privily*. Next, it was *uncondemned*—without any form of trial, and this was illegal in case of a citizen, however slight the punishment. ¶ *Being Romans*—*being Roman men*. This was the great point not before brought to view, that these prisoners were *Roman citizens*; not that they were born in Rome, nor resided there, but were honored with this citizenship as a distinction for some merit, or some service done by themselves or their families. This gave them the dignities and immunities of those living at Rome, among which was this exemption from torture and scourging. The Porcian Law (A. U. C. 506,) made this exemption absolute. It was, therefore, enough to say, "*I am a Roman citizen*," and this would secure protection throughout the vast empire. Why they had not pleaded this at first is not known, except that, in the turmoil and haste it would have seemed idle, or they may have not wished to plead their civil privilege against "suffering as Christians." (1 Pet. 4:16.) Now, however, the cause of Christ was involved,

38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. f Matt. 8:34.

40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed. g vs. 14.

and they would not accept deliverance to the disgrace of their Christian profession, or without some vindication of their right. Heb. 11:35. This position would also have a happy effect upon the relations of the Philippian Church in that community. Paul was a Roman citizen, free-born. It was not any purchased honor. His father or other ancestor had received the dignity in reward probably for some service rendered the State. See ch. 22:29. ¶ *Do they thrust us out*—implying that the magistrates were as anxious now to get quietly rid of them as they were lately to imprison them. And these innocent prisoners for Christ's sake, could not accept release, as if they were only too glad to be set free, without regard to the rights of their cause. ¶ *Nay verily. But let them come themselves and fetch us out*—openly and in person, as they themselves so lately tore off their garments and ordered them to be beaten, (vs. 22,) so they should come themselves and take them out. This bold and fearless course of the Apostle, insisting upon his right as a man and a citizen, served an important purpose, to put himself and the Christian Church in a proper position before the community. Besides, he would have seemed otherwise tacitly to admit the justice of their imprisonment.

38, 39. *Told—reported back.* The report of these facts, and of this unexpected position taken by the missionaries, alarmed the magistrates. The inhabitants of Rhodes had been deprived of their freedom, A. D. 44, for putting to death some Roman citizens. This offense was by another law punished as high-treason, by death and confiscation of property. This reply had the desired effect. They not only came, but came

and besought them to depart out of the city, and brought them out, as Paul demanded. Paul submitted five times to scourging by his own countrymen, (2 Cor. 11:24,) and became as a Jew to the Jews, though he might have pleaded his privilege as a Roman. In entreating them to depart out of the city, they seem to have had fear of the populace, who might be moved in their favor by this claim of Roman citizenship. The term for *besought*, is rendered by some *soothed*, and as it is the same term which in the next verse is rendered *comforted*, it might properly be read *soothed, quieted, hushed* them,—begging them to take no public action about it.

40. They show their firmness and steadfastness in their work, by going from the prison to the Church—which was then in the house of Lydia, where they had also sojourned. There they met the Christian brethren who formed the nucleus of this first Christian Church in Europe of whose origin we have any account. It would seem that Luke remained at Philippi, as Luke does not use "*we*" in the narration since ch. 16:10, till ch. 20:5. ¶ *They comforted them.* They gave them encouraging exhortations to persevere in the midst of persecutions. They did not depart from the city in any haste, but in a way becoming their dignified character and work. (See Epis. Philipp.) Thus was originated this Church at Philippi, which Paul calls his "*joy and his crown.*" Phil. 4:1. First the family of Lydia, and then the family of the jailor, was gathered in here God has always chosen to propagate His Church through a pious posterity. Blessed be God for the Gospel ministry, and the Christian Church in Europe. Under their power, Rome with her legions, and Greece with her philoso-



## CHAPTER XVII.

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

<sup>a</sup> Luke 4:16, ch. 9:20, and 13:5, 14, and 14:1, and 16:13, and 19:8.

2 And Paul, as his manner was, <sup>a</sup>went in unto them.

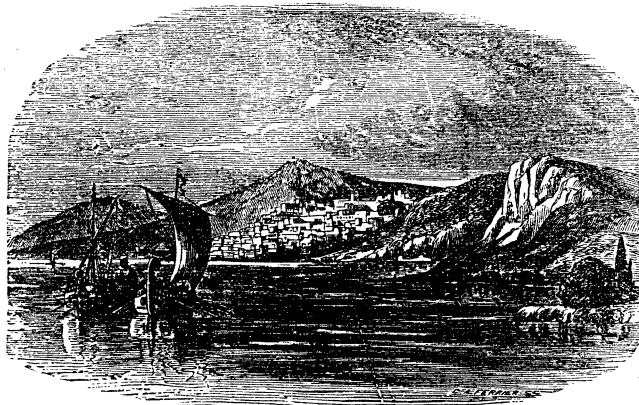
phies, have departed; but the cross of Christ, which Paul preached, rises into still greater prominence as a power in the world. Rom. 1:16; Cor. 1:18, 24.

## CHAPTER XVII.

27. PAUL IN EUROPEAN GREECE.—  
*Athens.* A. D. 52. Ch. 17: 1-34.

1. The historian Luke now speaks of the missionary company as "*they*," implying that he himself remained at Philippi. Some think that Timothy went with them from this city. ¶ *Passed through*—without stopping, still pursuing their way into Macedonia.—*Amphipolis* was about thirty-three miles south-

west from Philippi, on the river Strymon, and three miles from the sea. It was the capital of the first division of Macedonia, and an Athenian colony. They journeyed along the Macedonian extension of the Appian way. The great conqueror Xerxes had passed this way before him. Here is the hero of greater victories. ¶ *Apollonia* was about half-way between Amphipolis and Thessalonica—thirty miles. They probably rested but a night in each of these places, possibly because there was no synagogue there—probably because they would reach the chief central cities, as centres of influence. Thence they came to *Thessalonica*. This was



the capital city of Macedonia and the residence of the Proconsul. Cassander changed its name from Therma to Thessalonica, which was the name of his wife, who was sister of Alexander the Great. Its name is now Salonica, at the north-east of the Gulf of Salonica, and is a great sea-port, with some seventy thousand inhabitants—one-half of whom are Jews—and

the second city in European Turkey. Here they found a *synagogue*, (literally, *the synagogue*,) which they were expecting to find, and which the Jews in that district attended. This city became a great city of Christian influence. See 1 Thess. 1: 8.

2, 3. *As his manner was*—literally, *according to the custom* (with him.) This calls attention to his habit of seeking

and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

3 Opening and alleging, <sup>b</sup> that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, || whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

4 <sup>c</sup> And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and <sup>d</sup> Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

5 ¶ But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company,

the Jews and making first the Gospel offer to them, though he was the Apostle of the Gentiles. Rom. 11:13; ch. 13:46. As the synagogues were the places of resort for devout Gentiles also, he would thus have access to the more serious and inquiring of the Gentiles, and best promote his mission. ¶ *Three*. Literally, *upon three Sabbath days*. This stay of two weeks and over, at least, may have been all. But a reference to the two Epistles to the Thessalonians would seem to some to suppose a longer visit. ¶ *Reasoned—argued*. Discoursed with them *from the Scriptures*. He drew his proofs, evidences and arguments and appeals from the inspired Word of God. His topics were the sufferings and resurrection of Christ and the necessity for them. ¶ *Opening—unfolding*. See Luke 24:32. It is this unfolding, opening, expounding of the Scriptures that is the life of all Gospel preaching. ¶ *Alleging—propounding*—in distinct propositions; or it may mean *putting one passage by the side of another*, so as to show the reference of the whole to Christ. This was Christ's method; "expounding to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." (Luke 24:27.) ¶ *That Christ*. Literally, *that it was necessary that Christ should suffer and rise from the dead*. This same truth Christ Himself proved from the Scriptures, Luke 24:26, 27. "Ought not Christ"—literally, "*was it not necessary that Christ should suffer,*" the same terms being used as here. The necessity, according to the Divine plan, for the suffering and death of Christ to fulfill the

predictions and answer to the types, &c., and to atone for sin, was set forth by Paul. ¶ *Risen from the dead*—literally, *from the dead ones*. The necessity of Christ's resurrection to put the Divine seal upon His finished work, was also set forth. ¶ *And that this one* (the Messiah predicted as to die and rise again,) *is the Christ Jesus whom I announce unto you*. This was giving his discourse directness and application.

4. The immediate results of the Apostle's preaching are given. ¶ *Some of them* (of the Jews and proselytes,) *believed*, (were persuaded) by his expositions, *and were consorted with*, (literally, *were taken as an inheritance with*, or, *cast in their lot with*,) *Paul and Silas*, (see Eph. 1:11,) as part of Christ's "inheritance in the saints," (Ephesians 1:18,) and *of the devout* (worshiping) *Greeks*—those Gentiles (called Greeks, as distinct from Jews, and so called on account of their language,) who were wont to worship in the synagogue, whether proselytes or not—a great multitude; for the Gospel was more readily received by the Gentiles than by the Jews. *And of the chief* (first) *women*—the honorable women, as in ch. 13:50—not few. This shows the effect of his preaching upon different classes. Women are elsewhere noticed by Luke, as promptly accepting the Gospel. Ch. 16:13. See vss. 12, 34. (From 1 Thess. 1:9, we find that many of Paul's converts here were from idolaters.)

5. The effect upon the opposite class is here noticed. *The unbelieving Jews*, moved with envy at the calling of the

<sup>b</sup> Luke 24:46.  
ch. 18:28.  
Gal. 3:1.  
¶ Or, whom, said he, I preach.  
c ch. 28:24.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 15:22, 27, 32, 40.

and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, 'These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also;

7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.

8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things.

Gentiles, ("I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people," &c. Rom. 10: 19. See ch. 7: 9.) *taking to themselves, as accomplices, certain wicked men of the market fellows—loafers—loungers in public places—having gathered a company (literally, having got up a mob,) disturbed the city, excited a disturbance or tumult; and having beset (fallen upon) the house of Jason, &c. They lodged with Jason, (vs. 7,) who was a relative of Paul, if the same as mentioned Rom. 16: 21, and sought to bring them out unto the people, (the popular assembly,) before whom the rulers tried the causes, in the forum. Ch. 19: 30. Thessalonica was a free city. Paul alludes to this tumult, (1 Thess. 3: 4,) appealing to the Christians there as eye-witnesses of it. See, also, 2 Cor. 7: 5. Now is fulfilled what Christ forewarned his Apostles. Matt. 10: 17; 23: 34; Mark 13: 9; Luke 12: 11; 21: 12; John 16: 2. See ch. 13: 50; 14: 5, 19.*

6. *And not finding them, they dragged Jason, &c. The term rendered "drew" is not the common word for that, but a stronger term, meaning to drag with violence, as John 21: 8. ¶ Rulers. The term here is Politarchs, (rulers of the city,) the exact title of the rulers of this free city, while those of a Roman colony, as Philippi, were called στρατηγοί—Prætors—as we have seen, ch. 16: 22. An arch is found at Thessalonica, with an inscription, in which this very title is applied to the Thessalonian magistrates; and, strikingly enough, three of the names are those of three of Paul's companions, mentioned here or in the*

Epistles—Gaius, Secundus, and Sosipater. ¶ *Crying—clamoring—they who have turned the (habitable) world upside down, these, also, here are present. The enemies of Christianity here admit how widely it had already spread—even, they say, over the habitable world. Pliny the younger, writes to the Emperor from Bithynia, A. D. 102, that the temples were almost deserted, on account of the amazing progress of Christianity. These enemies here attribute to the Gospel itself the fruits of the world's opposition to it, as Christ had foretold. Matt. 10: 34, 36; Luke 12: 49.*

7. *Received. Entertained as guests. ¶ These all (these Christians, all of them,) do (practice) contrary to (in the face of) the decrees of Cesar, (in this particular,) saying that there is another king—Jesus. This charge had been brought against our Lord so as to move Pilate against Him, viz. that He claimed to be a King in opposition to Cæsar, the Roman Emperor. (Luke 23: 2.) It was false in the spirit of it. And the charge against Paul was either a similar device, or it arose from misapprehending his discourses about Christ's kingdom, (1 Thess. 5: 1; 2 Thess. 2: 1,) and His coming. The decrees here referred to are the State decrees against high treason, on the ground taken in John 19: 12—"Whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar." This prevailed with Pilate against our Lord, and it prevailed with the people against these missionaries.*

8. *Troubled. This charge excited the fears of the people, (literally, the*

9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.

10 ¶ And <sup>a</sup>the brethren immediately sent away Paul <sup>b</sup>and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming *thither* went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and <sup>c</sup>searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

12 Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

multitude, mob,) and the rulers, (literally, the *politarchs*,) because such a report would excite suspicion of their loyal relations to the government, (see ch. 19 : 40)—*having taken security*—that is, having bound them over, and taken legal guaranties from Jason and the rest, (the certain brethren, vs. 6,) that they would send them out of the city, or at least not suffer any disturbance of the public peace, they dismissed them. These responsible persons probably deposited their pledges, or a sum of money, as security to this effect. The missionaries had been in Thessalonica probably six or eight weeks, at least.

10. *Immediately*. This would imply that they did so in accordance with the securities just given; and *by night*, to avoid tumult, they sent away Paul and Silas, and perhaps also Timothy, who is thought to have been with them at this place, as he was afterwards sent by Paul to comfort the Christians there. 1 Thess. 3 : 2. Here again at Berea, they made their way promptly to the Jewish synagogue, bent upon their great missionary work. ¶ Berea was from fifty to sixty miles south-west of Thessalonica, and was situated on the river Lydias.

11. The people of Berea presented a very agreeable contrast with those of Thessalonica. They were *more noble*, i. e., more *ingenuous*, frank, unprejudiced. This was their distinctive char-

acter. *They received the word* (listened to the truth preached,) *with all readiness of mind*, (eagerness,) and *searched*—not only listening to discourses, but inquiring and investigating, so as to form opinions from the Scriptures themselves. This they did *daily*, so as to decide *if (whether) these things*—preached by the missionaries—*were so*, as they declared in their discourses.

12. *Therefore*. Literally, *many therefore of them believed*—as the proper result of these honest, earnest searchings of the Scriptures. They believed the Scriptures which they read, (viz. the Old Testament Scriptures, of course, for the New Testament Scriptures were none of them written as yet,) and so they believed in Christ as the promised Messiah. *And of the Grecian* (Gentile) *women who were honorable, and of (Gentile) men not a few*. As before, the females of *high position* embraced Christianity promptly, (vs. 4.) But commonly “not many noble are called.” 1 Cor. 1 : 26. Besides they were not alone, though they may have taken the lead; and so it is recorded, that not a few men did the same. The example and influence of mothers, wives, daughters and sisters in any community, can scarcely be overestimated.

13. This pleasant prospect of usefulness was suddenly disturbed, just as it had been before at Lystra, (ch. 14 : 19.) These persecuting Jews fol-

8 Matt. 10: 25

14 \* And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

1 ch. 18: 5.

15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.

m 2 Peter 2: 8.

¶ Or, full of idols.

16 ¶ Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.

low him from one city to another. Besides this, the Judaizers came after him to undo the good he had done, as at Galatia. See Galat. ch. 2. ¶ *At Berea.* Rather, *Also in Berea* (besides Thessalonica) *they came stirring up there also* (agitating) *the mob*, as they had done in Thessalonica, (vs. 5.)

14. *And then.* But then immediately (as vs. 10,) *the brethren*—the Christians already gathered there as a body of believers—*sent away Paul*, (a strong expression—*sent off away*,) not as before, where they merely sent him a few miles off to another city of Macedonia, but now to a more remote point. ¶ *To go as it were.* Literally, *as to the sea*—that is, in this direction—to the sea. The idea conveyed in our version, that there was some false impression intended, and that they meant to practice a duplicity by seeming to go seaward, and yet going by land, is not at all warranted by the Greek text. He doubtless went by sea, as there is no mention of any places passed by the land route. ¶ *But both Silas and Timotheus abode there still*—at Berea, though Paul would naturally have taken one of them for his company, only that his abrupt departure after so brief a stay, and the excellent opening there, would seem to make it desirable that they both should sojourn there at Berea. What results followed we do not know, only that no mention is made of any Berean Church, though so much is said of that at Philippi, and at Thessalonica, to both which Paul wrote Epistles. Perhaps the sudden departure of Silas and Timothy, vs. 15, may account for this, and there was no Church established there, or none to

reach any special importance. Thus Paul had planted three Churches in Macedonia at the call of the man, vs. 5, in a vision. And now, by the persecution of the Jews he is driven to another region. He had been brought in contact with Roman government and Grecian civilization. Now, he will go where these have their great centre, and where he may already hope for a new life of the Church, amidst such elements of power. The voyage would occupy about three days in favorable weather.

15. *Conducted.* Literally, *those who set down*, or set along Paul, on his journey, *led him as far as unto Athens.* Beza understands the force of the terms to be—*those who undertook to put Paul in a safe place.* So Geneva version reads, “And they had charge to conduct Paul safely.” Tyndale, “They that guided Paul.” It would seem that Paul may have gone to Athens at the instance of the brethren, who saw in that city so great a centre of influence, as “one of the eyes of Greece.” ¶ *And receiving a commandment.* The escorts of Paul were charged to summon Silas and Timothy to join Paul as soon as possible. This was probably on account of some new development not anticipated when Paul left Berea. Timothy, it would seem, joined Paul at Athens, and was sent by him to Thessalonica, (1 Thess. 3: 1, 2,) while Silas joined him not until Paul had left Athens and gone to Corinth, ch. 18: 5. So the messengers departed from Athens and returned to Berea.

16. *Waited.* Luke now notices what occurred in this famous city of Gentile learning. Athens and Corinth were

17 Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with them.

18 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoics, encountered him. And some said, What will this || babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. <sup>† Or, base fellow.</sup>

called the eyes of Greece, as Greece was the eye of the world. Poets, orators, philosophers, resorted thither as the seat and centre of the world's wisdom. *While Paul waited for them* (Silas and Timothy,) to join him and to aid him in his work, *his spirit was stirred*. The term implies violent excitement, (*"paroxysms"* is derived from it.) ¶ *When he saw*—literally, *beholding the city full of idols*. This was the aspect of the city which would strike every stranger. It was full of marble temples, and statues of gods and goddesses. Petronius said that it was easier to find a god there than a man! We saw the remains of the Acropolis and its surroundings, as they were once surmounted with the statue of Minerva, from the chisel of Phidias; also, the road to Eleusis, and the traces there of the Eleusinian mysteries. All these show how the city must have been overrunning with idols.

17. *Therefore—so then disputed he*. This term, as here used, seems to refer to continuous discourse, as vs. 2, and ch. 20: 7, 9. As used with another preposition in ch. 24: 12, it means disputing or discussion. Two classes are found here, as in Berea and Thessalonica; the native Jews and the Gentile worshipers, whether proselytes or not. This gave him access to the Gentile world, while his first appeal was yet to the Jews. ¶ *The market*. Here, also, Paul resorted, according to the custom among the Greeks at Athens, of debating freely in the assemblies of the people gathered in the *Agora*, or public square or forum. This was the established habit of the philosophers for popular instruction. The terms imply that this was a public discussion in the market, and thus distinct from

the discourse in the synagogue. And this discussion was held *daily*, with those who chanced to meet him. "The visit of the people to the market, formed part of the usual arrangements for the day, and all those unfettered by the claims of business resorted to this place of general assembly, where they found at once the market, gymnasia and baths, and tabernæ of all kinds."—*Becker's Charicles*. So of Socrates it is said: "It was his custom in the morning to visit the places of public resort and those set apart for gymnastic exercises; at noon to appear among the crowds in the market-place, and to spend the rest of the day in those parts of the city where he would be likely to meet with the largest number of persons."—*Anthon*.

18. Though there were the Platonists and Peripatetics, whose schools were farther off from the Agora, the Stoic philosophers had their public resort near to the market Eretria, which was most frequented. They were so called from the *stoa*, the porch, public court or piazza, where their founder Zeno taught, B. C. 350. The *Epicureans* were so called from Epicurus, who about 306 B. C. founded his school, and taught in a public garden, which he purchased for about one thousand four hundred dollars, and left to his adherents for the teaching of his system. The Epicureans were the pleasure lovers—held that the world had sprung from chance, (see vs. 24,) that pleasure was the chief good, and that God was indifferent to human affairs, (see vs. 26–31.) While these were the Grecian Sadducees or Atheists, the Stoics were the Grecian Pharisees. They held to fate as determining all affairs, and were pantheists; holding that all souls were emanations from

¶ Or, *Mars' hill*.  
It was the highest court in Athens.

19 And they took him, and brought him unto || Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

20 For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean?

21 (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing.)

God. These also Paul refers to and refutes, (vss. 27, 28, 31,) as they *encountered* (fell in with) him in these public places. ¶ *Babbler—what will—rather, What does this babbler will to say.* This term applies to a bird picking up seed, and then to one picking up scraps on the road, or by begging or stealing; and then to one who is a retailer of scraps of news, or of knowledge. The sense is originally, perhaps, a *sower of words*—one who scatters words broad-cast, and a waster of words—an *idle babbler*—including the idea of a beggarly and vile fellow. ¶ *Set forth—a publisher, proclaimer of strange gods*—rather, of *foreign divinities*—such as had been unknown to the Athenians. Socrates had been condemned on the same charge. They gathered this impression, “*because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection*,” from which they inferred that he wished to introduce Jesus, and the Father who raised him from the dead, as new gods for their worship. It could scarcely be supposed that they misunderstood “the resurrection” for a goddess, since this is here given by Luke only as the name or definition of Paul’s doctrine, which, however, he did not commonly call by this simple word. ¶ *Preached—evangelized*—published as good news.

19. *Took him*—evidently, as the term implies, without violence; perhaps, however, in a semi-judicial manner, to make his cause more fully known before a public assembly, and not before the judges. We found the Areopagus, or Hill of Mars, to be a rocky knoll, about sixty feet high at the south end, under the shadow of the Acropolis, from which it is only two

hundred yards distant, westerly. Paul was probably led up hither from the Agora, or market in the vale below, ascending the rock by sixteen steps cut in the side. On the top is a stone bench, having three sides. This was probably the tribunal. On the east and west side of it is a raised block, one for the criminal, the other for the accuser. Hither they led up Paul to expound his doctrine from this open court-house platform, asking, *may we know—can we know—may we know, if you please? Literally, are we able?* (i. e. with your permission.) The *new doctrine*, or new teaching which he had put forth in the market place in his discussions, they would more fully know. Here then, in the presence of the grandest temples and monuments of heathenism, Paul was called on to expound Christianity.

20. *Strange things*—surprising—in accordance with the term before used of foreign, unheard of gods. The resurrection of the dead was a doctrine unheard of by any heathen people. ¶ *We would know.* Literally, *we wish to know what these things would be, or wish to be.*

21. *For.* This explanation of their proceeding is here furnished. It was most of all at the impulse of curiosity. The whole population, both native and foreign, the citizens and those sojourners who were attracted thither by its famous schools, and elegant entertainments—*spent their time—were at leisure for nothing else than to tell or to hear some newer thing*—the very latest news. It has been computed that there were three hundred and forty places in Athens where people met to talk politics and miscellany. In Thucydides, *Cleon*

22 ¶ Then Paul stood in the midst of || Mars' hill, and said, *Ye* men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. <sup>1 Or, the court of the Areopagites.</sup>

23 For as I passed by, and beheld your || devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. <sup>1 Or, gods that ye worship, 2 Thess. 2: 4.</sup>

24 <sup>a</sup> God that made the world and all things therein, <sup>n ch. 14: 15.</sup>

charges the Athenians "that they are always slaves to unaccustomed things, but despisers of the accustomed."

22. Paul now taking his stand on that celebrated summit, surrounded by the temples and statues of their divinities, delivers an address wonderfully pointed and comprehensive, and such as must have been given him by the Holy Ghost to speak. He opens in the style of their renowned orators. *Ye men of Athens*—literally, *Athenian men*. He now aims to find in the idols and temples of Athens, some fact or feature of things whereon to link his own evangelical preaching, becoming a Gentile to the Gentiles. ¶ *In all things. In all respects ye are very religious. Literally, have very great reverence for divinities.* This might be understood in a sense that would be accepted by them as flattering. It was intended to be conciliatory, and thus to pave the way for his presentation of Divine truth. He, therefore, stated only what was truth, that they were addicted to divinities, as was seen in their immense and splendid arrangements for the worship of their various gods. This was, of course, to a Christian view, the grossest superstition. But Paul does not choose to affront them by such an accusation as would cut off his argument and shut him out from further access to them. The Holy Spirit, who inspired Paul, did not sanction such a policy. See *Erasmus*, quoted by Du Veil, p. 89.

23. *For.* He gives the ground on which he had formed this judgment. ¶ *Passed by*—literally, *passed through* (your city.) While he was waiting for Silas and Timothy, he saw the city full of idols, (vs. 16.) ¶ *Behold*—surveying, reconnoitering. ¶ *Your devotions.* Rath-

er, *your objects of worship.* ¶ *I found also an altar,* in addition to the rest. ¶ *With this*—literally, *on which had been inscribed, To the Unknown God*; literally, *To an Unknown God.* He does not, therefore, introduce a new God, but proposes to set forth the God whom they worshiped as *unknown*. That there was such an altar, is plain from this testimony of Paul. It is believed that when any calamity or deliverance occurred that was not to be referred to any of the known gods, an altar was inscribed to *an unknown god*. There is no evidence that the God of the Jews was meant. ¶ *Whom therefore.* They certainly will not object to knowledge, of which they so publicly and solemnly confessed their want. *Therefore, I am declaring* (proclaiming) *unto you Him whom ye worship, without knowing*, (i. e., without knowing whom, you worship.) He does not mean to say that they were worshipping the true God without knowing it, but that, as they were confessing their ignorance of God so far as to worship a *God unknown to them*, he would proclaim unto them the true God. Paul hints that "this inscription was a testimony to the innate idea of God which is universal to man." It was a trace of a certain yearning in the heathen breast after a knowledge of the true God, beyond all the findings of heathenism. Therefore, the Scriptures nowhere offer any argument to prove God's existence, but they assume it as an admitted truth.

24. The Apostle now uses with idolaters the same confounding argument which Isaiah employed with those of his day, referring repeatedly to the creatorship of God. Isa. 40: 21, 23; 42: 5. "He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them



• Matt. 11: 25.  
p ch. 7: 48.

g Ps. 50: 8.

r Gen. 2: 7.  
Num. 16: 22.  
Job 1: 10, and  
27: 3, and 33: 4.  
Isa. 42: 5, and  
57: 16.  
Ecc. 12: 1.

• Deut. 32

seeing that he is • Lord of heaven and earth, • dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25 Neither is worshipped with men's hands, • as though he needed any thing, seeing • he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26 And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and • the bounds of their habitation;

that walk therein." In opposition to the Epicurean notion of chance, he sets forth God as the Creator, appealing to the first principles of natural religion, which arrives at the invisible things of God, even His eternal power and Godhead, from the creation of the world. Rom. 1: 20. Herein they were without excuse for being ignorant of God. ¶ *Seeing He is*—literally, *He being Lord*. Here he put forth the doctrine of an over-ruling Providence against the Epicurean notion that God is indifferent to human affairs. The Creator is the Upholder of all things. John 1: 3, 4; Heb. 1: 3. Even Plato dreamed not of a Creator of heaven and earth; and Aristotle did not distinguish between God and the world. ¶ *Dwelleth not*. He here opposes the low ideas of heathenism which made their divinities take up their abode in their temples. God, this Creator and Upholder of the Universe, *does not take up His residence in manufactured temples*.—I could never fully estimate this point, till I stood on Mars' Hill and imagined Paul looking out upon the higher summit of the Acropolis towering there above him, crowded with temples and surmounted with the Parthenon, and crowned with the wonderful statue of *Minerva*, who was called "the Goddess." Around him were the beautiful Temple of Theseus, which yet stands in good preservation, and the Temple of Jupiter Olympus, so that almost every conspicuous object in the view was either a temple or a statue of some idol god. No wonder that the Gentiles fell into this error, when even the Jews had to be warned against such a mistake. Isa. 66: 1; Acts 7: 48.

25. *Neither is worshipped*—rather, *ministered unto*. This opposes the popular heathen idea that the gods were dependent on the worship of their temple services, and that the sacrifices were gift-offerings to the gods, and the odors a refreshing smell. ¶ *As though*—literally, *needing* (having need of) *any thing besides*—in addition to—outside of Himself. ¶ *Seeing*—literally, *himself giving to all life and breath*—literally, *the all things*, which they enjoy.

26. *Made of one blood*. This was directly against the Athenian belief that they were of superior blood to foreigners, and against the whole system of polytheism, which held to various stocks and divers origins of the human family, under different gods. But Paul asserts that as there is but one God, so there is but one human family, and one common origin of all nations, from one original pair. The unity of God is thus closely associated with the unity of the race. All the diversities that are found in different people are proved, by scientific researches, to be unessential, and no greater than those which are found among animals of the same species—as the dog, horse, &c. (See Prichard's *History of Man*.) ¶ *Made* (*created of*) *one blood*. So created them as that they have but one blood running through all their veins. He may refer to the hematological fact that the blood of the whole human family is the same—as science has proved—and is different in its analysis from all other blood. However diverse the form and features and complexion of different tribes and nations, their *blood*, when submitted to the microscope, is found to be always the same; and it can be

27 'That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us :

28 For <sup>in him we live, and move, and have our being ;</sup> <sup>as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.</sup>

detected and distinguished from the blood of any other animal, however nearly it may resemble mankind.

¶ *To dwell—settle.* Though there are different nations in different climes, yet they are of one origin. The 10th chapter of Genesis gives the most satisfactory account of the original settlement of the earth. The Athenians boasted that they were not derived, but indigenous to the soil, and against such an absurd claim this assertion of the Apostle was aimed. They, of course, regarded the Jews as inferior to them, and this also would be aimed at. ¶ *And hath—having defined—prescribed.* This diffusion of men over the face of the earth was in conformity, not with blind fate, but with God's appointment of the seasons preordained—epochs—eras—dates of universal history, as of Babel and the flood; and national history—growth and decay, &c. Hence He is Creator, Preserver, and Governor, also. ¶ *And the bounds of their settlement—assigned them their seasons as a nation, and their territorial confines.* Hence the Athenians had, like all other people, derived their times and confines from the all-determining will of God, and not from a multiplicity of gods, as they held. The heathen generally had no idea of a history of the world governed by God's providence, and pointing to God.

27. God had an intelligent and wise aim in all this creation and distribution of men over the globe. The end of all His providential arrangement is, that men should seek the Lord, as being dependent on Him, and sustained by Him; who, as creator, and preserver, and governor, makes Himself known to men. Rom. 1. So that they are without excuse for their ignorance of Him as "an unknown God." ¶ *If haply—if perhaps, expressing a contin-*

gency, not very likely to occur—as much as to say, though this is God's aim to lead men to seek Him, the only difficulty and the only question is, whether they will indeed do so, seeing they are blinded by nature, and the heathen, without a written revelation, must grope like the blind and feel after Him. He would admit that the light which the heathen have, without revelation, is comparatively indistinct, and their case, as benighted by sin and repugnance, is full of difficulty, so that it is, beforehand, the merest peradventure whether any, groping thus in the dark, would ever find Him. Although indeed this is not because of any distance at which He is from us, because He is not far from every one of us. Hence the failure to find God is not because of His remoteness or indifference to human affairs, as the Epicureans held, but from men's own fault, "not liking to retain God in their knowledge." Rom. 1: 28. This charges the Athenians with the fault of having the true God an unknown God to them.

28. For. To show how near God is to us and how intimately connected He is with all our affairs, Paul gives as a reason why we may and ought to seek and find Him, that in Him we live, and move, and exist. We are entirely dependent even for life, motion and existence itself, upon God; and it is in Him, as if our every breath and motion were involved in Him. He must then be the nearest possible to us. There cannot be any essential difficulty in finding Him, if indeed only we be inclined to seek, and feel our way after Him. This truth he enforces by reminding them that it was admitted in words by their own poets. True, it was not acknowledged in its proper sense. But it could be quoted as their own formal testimony. Aratus, a poet

z Isa. 40:18.

a ch. 14:16.

Rom. 3:25.

b Luke 24:47.

Titus 2:11, 12.

1 Peter 1:14,

and 4:3.

c ch. 10:42.

Rom. 2:16, and

14:10.

29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, <sup>a</sup> we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30 And <sup>a</sup> the times of this ignorance God winked at; but <sup>b</sup> now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which <sup>c</sup> he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom

of Tarsus and a countryman of Paul, had used this language about 270 B. C., and so also had *Cleanthes*, another and cotemporary of Aratus, used it, who was a disciple of Zeno, the founder of the Stoics. He had addressed it to Jupiter. But even they held it as true only of the Supreme God. Grotius says that "what was said by Aratus of Jupiter, Paul adapteth to the true God, because by Jupiter the wisest among the Greeks did understand the Most High God." ¶ *His offspring—the family of Him*—the race. They held to physical derivation from one Supreme and universal existence. The passage reads:

"For we all greatly need Jupiter,  
For we are his offspring—full of grace,  
He grants men  
Tokens of favor."

29. *Forasmuch then.* Taking them up, then, upon their own ground—taking this to be admitted by yourselves, *that we are the offspring of God*—he infers from this admitted dignity of human nature and its dependence upon God, the absurdity of holding *the Godhead* (literally, the Divine) to be *like unto gold or silver or stone*, the work of men's hands. The heathen argued that because we are God's offspring, God must be of like form with us, and may be so represented. But this is to degrade the Godhead to the level of material objects, and to make us inferior even to gold and silver, as derived from such a source. This system is, therefore, "a degradation as much of man as of God." ¶ *Gold.* The colossal statue of Minerva crowned the Acropolis, and was to be seen from afar, executed in gold and ivory by Phidias—the gold glistening in the sun.

30. The Apostle now refers to the

fact that the past history of the heathen world was a history of idolatry, involving *this* grossest ignorance of God, and of course, of all that is truly good. These Athenians confessed their ignorance by this inscription of an altar to an *unknown God*. These long times of heathen ignorance God *overlooked*—passed over; as he had said to the Lycaonians, "God, in times past, suffered all nations to walk in their own ways," ch. 14, 16, (to show the universal depravity, and the world's inability to attain salvation)—without sending them a revelation, or the preaching of repentance, faith, and judgment to come; and without signally sweeping away idolaters by swift destruction of them for such heinous sin—as if He did not take any strict account of it. For after that, in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, &c. 1 Cor. 1:21. See Rom. 1:2; 3:25, 26. ¶ *But now.* This overlooking has now come to an end. The revelation of God's will is now to all people, and not confined to Israel. God now expressly *commandeth all men, everywhere*—whatever their nation or country—to *repent*. This term signifies *to change the mind*, leading also to a change of practice. Repentance is a turning away from evil to good—from misery to happiness—from Satan to God. And this is our highest duty, and chiefest interest. There is no excuse for ignorance now, and ignorance is no excuse. Romans 1:20.

31. This command to repentance is part of a plan which provides also for a judgment day, and a Judge of quick and dead. God does not any longer pass over transgression, because He has expressly *appointed—fixed—a day—a set time*. This announcement of a coming judgment day must have been

he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath || given assurance unto <sup>¶ Or, offered faith.</sup> all men, in that <sup>d</sup> he hath raised him from the dead. <sub>d ch. 2: 24.</sub>

32 ¶ And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

33 So Paul departed from among them.

34 Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which *was* Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

most impressive, as uttered from this most celebrated tribunal of the world. ¶ *The world*—literally, *the inhabited world*. All, whether Jews or Greeks—all nations and people. ¶ *In righteousness*—not as human judges, even of the Areopagus, often in gross unrighteousness. “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” The highest exhibition of justice will then be made. ¶ *By that man*—literally, *In (by) a man*. This is the great attractive feature of the judgment most interesting to men, most conciliatory, that A MAN is to be the Judge. The Greeks held that men, such as Minos and Rhadamanthus, were made judges of men in the world of spirits—that these were demigods, deified after death. This was their dim idea of the great truth, as traced out in their mythology. To “THE MAN”—the God-man—has been intrusted this universal judgment. God “hath given to Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man.” (John 5: 27.) He who alone is both God and Man, must needs be the only Judge. ¶ *Ordained*—designated—defined. ¶ *Assurance*—literally, *having furnished faith*—ground of faith—to all men, having raised Him from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is the great miraculous fact which declared Him to be the Son of God with power, (Rom. 1: 4,) and attested His claim to be the Judge of the world. His resurrection also proved that all men would be raised; and this would be for judgment at His hands. (1 Cor. 15: 22.) OBSERVE.—Paul has taken up his hearers on their own grounds, and has skillfully led them to the great vital doctrine of Christ. Al-

ready he has shown that faith in the doctrine of Christ, as the risen Judge, who, as God-man, is linked to us, is the great requisite. And now, with this knowledge of God, they may draw near to Him; for this only Judge is the only Dispenser and Saviour—the day’s-man betwixt God and us.

32. *When they heard*—literally, *of a resurrection of dead men*—as inferred from the resurrection of Christ, or from the doctrine of a general judgment; since the judgment of any one supposes the presence of body and soul, which together constitute the person. ¶ *Some mocked*. The doctrine was not admitted by the Greeks. It was held to be an impossibility; and so their philosophers and poets had distinctly asserted. It would seem that this outbreak of mockery interrupted Paul in his discourse, as he was passing to a fuller exposition of the Christian faith. ¶ *Others said*. It may be that these parties were, respectively, the Epicureans and Stoics; but not necessarily so. This was probably only a more polite way of dismissing the subject; as would seem from Paul’s prompt departure, and from his not addressing them again, as he would certainly have done if invited; and from the “*howbeit*” in vs. 34, as if in contrast with this dismissal.

33. *So*. Things being so, *Paul departed from the midst of them*—i. e. from the assembly at the Areopagus, not from the city. See ch. 18: 1.

34. *Howbeit*. Though he was so summarily dismissed by this assembly, *some men, adhering to him, believed* these doctrines which the multitude rejected. ¶ *Among whom*. It is here

## CHAPTER XVIII.

1 AFTER these things Paul departed from Athens, and came to Corinth;

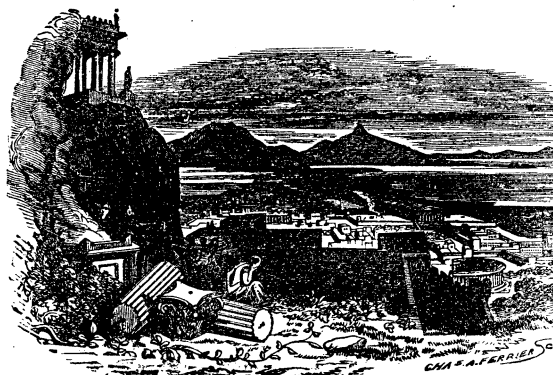
mentioned that one of the judges of the Areopagus, the most learned and eminent court in the world, was one of Paul's adherents. Eusebius says that he was the first bishop of Athens, as stated by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth. This seems to have been a mere tradition, according to the custom in such cases to associate distinguished names with this office, without any certain ground. ¶ *Damaris*. This woman here specially mentioned, was probably a noted person also, not, as some have supposed, the wife of Dionysius, else it would have been differently expressed. And not these alone, but others with them. It is known that the Parthenon, on the summit of the Acropolis, was afterwards converted into a Christian Church, and the Greeks became so opposed to idols, that on this point mainly a schism occurred between the Churches of the East and West, in the eighth century. The Church of Athens, however, never seems to have been as prominent as some others in less distinguished cities. Here we learn (1) How little mere worldly learning can do in attaining to the knowledge of Christ. (1 Cor. 1: 19-21.) (2) How Paul treats all such heathen philosophers as idolaters, which they were; and (3) How he preaches to them the

plain doctrines of repentance and faith. We shall see how the more commercial Corinthians received the Gospel, better than the philosophic Athenians.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

§ 28. PAUL AT CORINTH A YEAR AND A HALF.—WRITES EPISTLES TO THE THESSALONIANS—(GALLIO.) A. D. 52-54. Ch. 18: 1-18.

1. Paul had sent Timothy to Thessalonica, and if Silas came to him at Athens, he had sent him back also to Macedonia; he himself having been hindered by Satan from going thither. ¶ *After these things*, which have just been related as occurring at Athens, *Paul departed thence and came to Corinth*. The voyage could be made in two days. It is now made in four hours by steam. Athens and Corinth were called "the eyes of Greece"—most famous for learning and the highest reach of philosophy. But "the world by wisdom knew not God," instead of finding Him out by their wisdom. Corinth was the capital of Achaia, situated on an isthmus, between the Ægean and Ionian Seas, (a bridge between Europe and Asia,) and had a harbor on the European side, called *Lechea*, and another on the Asiatic side, called *Cenchrea*. The



2 And found a certain Jew named <sup>a</sup>Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome :) and came unto them.

3 And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, <sup>b</sup>and wrought: for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

4 <sup>c</sup>And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5 And <sup>d</sup>when Silas and Timotheus were come from

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 16: 3.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 16: 19.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. 4: 19.

<sup>5</sup> ch. 20: 34.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 4: 12.  
<sup>1</sup> Thess. 2: 9.  
<sup>2</sup> Thess. 3: 8.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 17: 2.

<sup>d</sup> ch. 17: 14, 15.

Acro-corinthus, corresponding with the Acropolis at Athens, stood on a summit eighteen hundred feet high, and we saw it distinctly from the top of the Parthenon, at Athens, about forty-five miles, so clear was the atmosphere. The Corinthian style of architecture was the most splendid of all. This was a very central point, of the greatest importance for its relations with East and West, to be gained over to Christianity.

2. It is here stated how he fell in with Aquila and Priscilla, who are afterwards mentioned in the Epistles. Rom. 16: 3; 1 Cor. 16: 19; ch. 18: 18, 19. Aquila was a native of Pontus, a northern province of Asia Minor, near the Black Sea. He had lately come to Corinth from Italy, (Rome,) on account of a decree of the Roman Emperor Claudius, banishing the Jews who resided there from the city. This decree is referred to by Suetonius, who says that it was on account of tumults among the Jews, the instigator being Chrestus, (Christ,) or on his account. As no mention is made of the conversion of this couple under Paul, it is inferred that they were Christian converts already, probably at Rome, where there must have been a Church originating possibly from the "strangers at Rome," converted at Pentecost, (ch. 2: 10.) As yet the Romans made no distinction between Jews and Christians, but regarded the Christians as a Jewish sect; and the term Jew here, denotes simply the nation. ¶ *Came to them*—as is further narrated in the next verse. True religion draws men of different sorts together, and true Chris-

tians soon find out an affinity between them, in spite of common distinctions.

3. The chain of providential arrangement is here given. God had so ordered their trade as to keep them together, since it was important for His cause. ¶ *Same craft—of like trade*. The Jews used to have their sons taught some trade; and their Rabbis held that whoever did not, taught his son to be a thief. ¶ *He abode*. Paul was thus provided with a home there. He refers often to his custom of sustaining himself by working with his own hands. Ch. 20: 34; 1 Cor. 9: 12; 2 Cor. 7: 2; 1 Thess. 2: 9; 2 Thess. 3: 8. ¶ *Tent makers*. Their trade was this, to make tents for travelers and soldiers, probably of hair cloth, from ~~the~~ coarse goat's hair, (Syriac—*canopy makers*.) Such as are now in common use thereabouts. At this time he received some supplies from Macedonia, sent, perhaps, by Timothy and Silas. See 2 Cor. 11: 9.

4. There were many Jews in Corinth, and of course there was a synagogue there. Just now an extra number of those banished from Rome would be there. As was his custom, he resorted thither, and published the Gospel, first to the Jews there assembled, and to the Gentiles, who also attended there as proselytes or not. ¶ *Reasoned—discoursed* publicly, and from week to week. This is the term commonly used in the narrative, meaning sometimes, *disputed*. ¶ *Persuaded*. Not only aimed to persuade, but favorably influenced them.

5. It is not certain whether Silas had joined Paul at Athens, according

• Job 32:18.  
 Ab. 17:3.  
 vs. 28.  
 || Or, is the  
 Christ.  
 { ch. 13:45.  
 { Peter 4:4.  
 9 Neh. 5:13.  
 Matt. 10:14.  
 ch. 13:51.  
 A Lev. 20:9, 11  
 12.  
 2 Sam. 1:16.

Macedonia, Paul was <sup>e</sup>pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews *that Jesus || was Christ*.

6 And <sup>r</sup>when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, <sup>s</sup>he shook *his* raiment, and said unto them, <sup>a</sup>Your blood <sup>be</sup> upon your own heads; <sup>i</sup>I *am* clean: <sup>k</sup>from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

to his summons, (ch. 17:15,) and been sent back to Macedonia, or whether he had been delayed, and had just now joined the Apostle. When they came to him he was *pressed* (straitened) *in the spirit, testifying to the Jews the Christ Jesus*—that the Christ or Messiah, prophesied of, was Jesus of Nazareth. (The Greek term *Christ* means the same as the Hebrew term *Messiah*.) Paul was stirred with a new impulse, on their arrival—or it may mean, they found him pressed (straitened) in soul with anxiety, and absorbed in testifying of Christ. The latter seems to be the more exact sense of the terms. Some critics read “word,” or discourse, instead of “spirit.” He was straitened in *discourse*, or anxiously pressed—entirely absorbed in preaching the Gospel. Here, it is supposed,

*Paul writes his First Epistle to the Thessalonians.* Corinth.  
 A. D. 52.

The arrival of Silas and Timothy (vs. 5,) was a crisis in Paul's work. Timothy brought from Thessalonica such reports of the Church there, as led Paul to write to them an Epistle, the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. This was the earliest of all his Epistles, and was written at Corinth, A. D. 52. See ch. 18:5. This is, accordingly, the oldest portion of the New Testament, written ten or twelve years before either of the Gospels. This Church had been planted by the Apostle, (ch. 17:1.) It was one which deeply interested him, for its eminent Christian graces, 1 Thess. 1 2-10: For it he had labored

most diligently and faithfully, ch. 2:1-12. They had suffered persecution from their countrymen the Gentiles, 13-16, on which account he had wished to visit them, but being hindered, had sent Timothy, who had brought good tidings of their faith and charity, 2:17; 3:7. He wrote also not only to encourage them, but to exhort them to all holy living, (ch. 4:1-13,) and to correct some errors into which they had fallen, supposing that believers who died would be at disadvantage in regard to our Lord's second coming. Ch. 4:13. He wrote this Epistle, we see, amidst his troubles and discouragements in Corinth, where he says he was “in weakness and in fear and in much trembling.” 1 Cor. 2:3.

6. *Opposed themselves.* This term is elsewhere rendered *resisting*, (Rom. 13:2,) as by a formal, organized resistance. ¶ *Blaspheming.* Their opposition rose to the pitch of speaking blasphemous words against the Gospel and Christ, of whom he had just borne witness, (vs. 5.) The Jews at Antioch in Pisidia, had done the same, (ch. 13:45,) and Paul had turned away from them as here, to the Gentiles. ¶ *Shook his raiment*—literally, *shaking off*, or *out*—signifying that he would shake off all connection with them, and witness against them, as before he shook off the dust of his feet. Ch. 13:51; see Neh. 5:13. ¶ *Your blood.* See ch. 20:26; Ezek. 18:30; 33:4. The ruin and responsibility of it rests upon your own heads. This symbolical language arose probably from the sacrificial custom of laying the hand upon

7 ¶ And he departed thence, and entered into a certain <sup>Ex. 18:13 and 23:4.</sup> man's house, named Justus, <sup>Ex. 3:18, 19, and 33:9.</sup> one that worshipped God, <sup>ch. 20:26.</sup> whose house joined hard to the synagogue. <sup>2 ch. 13:46, and 28:28.</sup>

8 <sup>1</sup> And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, <sup>1 Cor. 1:14.</sup> believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized.

the head of a victim, and imprecating on it the curse. See Matt. 12:24-31. ¶ *Clean.* "Pure from the blood." Ch. 20:26. See Matt. 27:25. So the hands were washed (as Pilate) to signify freedom from the blame of their condemnation. ¶ *From henceforth—from the present, I will go unto the Gentiles*—that is, so far as Corinth is concerned. He would turn his attention and labors from the Jews to the Gentiles of Corinth. m

7. This solemn declaration was at once carried out. *Having departed thence*—that is, from the synagogue—he *went into the house of a certain one, Justus by name*—as a place of teaching, instead of the synagogue, while he continued to reside with Aquila. This Justus was a Gentile proselyte, here described as one *who worshiped God*, and thus differing from his fellow Gentiles. It would seem that he must already have become a Christian, though some suppose that he was as yet only a sympathizer with Paul, who opened his house to him, and afterwards became a believer. His house was well located, because it *joined hard by* (was adjoining) *the synagogue*. It would give any Jews who wished, an opportunity to attend, while the Gentiles would be more likely to resort thither to the house of a proselyte than to the synagogue. It would also serve better for a public testimony, to open a house under the eye of the synagogue.

8. *Crispus*. A leading Jew now comes out from the synagogue, and with his family joins himself to the Christian community. He was *the chief ruler of the synagogue*; and if these were the hereditary Elders of the Jews, there must have been several, of whom there was a chief, or leading one—the oldest or most eminent. It is supposed that the special interest attaching to this

conversion, led Paul himself to baptize this man, 1 Cor. 1:14, together with one Gaius, (see Rom. 16:23,) and the household of Stephanas, though the account Paul himself gives of it is all that we know of his reasons. It may have been on account of the absence of Silas and Timothy. ¶ *With all his house*. This mention of *all his house*, though it is here connected with believing, seems to imply that the membership of the parent carried with it the membership of the household, and they were accounted as a Christian house. *Moreover these several instances of Cornelius*, (ch. 10:24, 44,) *and of Lydia*, (ch. 16:15,) *and of the jailor*, (ch. 16:33, 34,) *show a connection not only between the parent's believing and the baptism of his household, but also between the parent's believing and the believing of all his house.* God proves thus that such a household covenant is in force not only by having the seal applied, but by actually granting that which the seal signifies—showing His fidelity on the spot, and putting it on record to honor the household ordinance, and to make good the Abrahamic covenant, without delay, by granting "the blessing of Abraham." ¶ *Many*. The Church increased rapidly. ¶ *Hearing*—the Gospel message and doctrine—for how shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard? For the character of these converts, see 1 Cor. 1:16. "Not many wise men after the flesh, &c." They were from the middle and lower classes chiefly. The richer merchants were given to licentious living, and the philosophy in vogue was very pretentious, and the people were used to a vain wordly wisdom and pompous oratory. NOTE.—If the Gospel could have power in such a corrupt city as Corinth, it is able by God's grace to convert any corrupt city of our day.



ch. 27:11.

9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace.

Jer. 1:18, 19.  
Matt. 28:20.

10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.

Gr, sat there.

11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 ¶ And when Gallio was the deputy of Achaia, the Jews made insurrection with one accord against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat.

9. These events seem to have inflamed the Jewish opposition; so that a supernatural vision was granted Paul for his consolation. *The Lord* (Jesus) appeared to him. See below vs. 11, (2 Thess. 3:2.) *Fear not.* He was in circumstances where he might yield to a fear of his persecutors, and, perhaps, might even shrink from preaching boldly amidst such violent opposition; therefore he was charged to *speak and be not silent.*

10. *For.* This was the strong consolation—God's presence and protection assured to Him, and the positive promise as to the results. (1) That no man, not even the most bitter and ferocious foe, should *set on* him (as a dog,) so as to *hurt* him. See vs. 12. (2) There were fruits secured to his ministry according to the eternal covenant which gave the Master *much people* in that city of Corinth. For the sake of gathering these, his life would be preserved. (See ch. 27:24, the vision in the wreck.) The term for *people* refers to a covenant people. Ps. 110:3. *OBSERVE.*—"The Lord knoweth them that are His." (2 Tim. 2:19.) "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring," &c. John 10:16. Ch. 13:48 and 15:17. This Church of Corinth was one of the most distinguished. Paul wrote to them two Epistles, which should be studied in connection with this history of their planting, and they show us, more than any other portions of the New Testament, the Church in contact with heathenism.

11. This long sojourn in Corinth, for a year and six months, (A. D. 52-54,) shows that Paul regarded it as a great

centre for his Apostolic operations. During this interval, it would seem that he visited other parts of Achaia, and established Churches. See 2 Thess. 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:1. ¶ *Continued*—literally, *sat down*—strengthened and satisfied to remain, by the Divine encouragements. ¶ *Teaching.* He was employed according to the great Apostolic commission—teaching and discipling. During this sojourn

*Paul writes his Second Epistle to the Thessalonians.* Corinth. A. D. 53.

In this Epistle Paul aims to correct their misunderstanding of his teachings in respect to the second advent of our Lord. See 2 Thess. 2:5. Many had abused the doctrine, so as to neglect their proper business, on account of their expectation that Christ would immediately appear. He charges them, therefore, that certain great events of prophecy are first to take place—as the great apostasy and the appearing of "the Man of sin." (2 Thess. 2:12.) The opening and close of the Epistle contain exhortations and encouragements to holiness, and directions to maintain Church discipline in case of idle or disorderly members.

12. *Gallio.* This man was the brother of Seneca, the philosopher, who speaks of him as most amiable toward all classes. The form of the narrative here would intimate that the accession of Gallio, or his yielding temper, came

13 Saying, This *fellow* persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14 And when Paul was now about to open *his* mouth, Gallio said unto the Jews, ° If it were a matter of wrong <sup>ch. 23 : 29, and 25 : 11, 15.</sup> or wicked lewdness, O *ye* Jews, reason would that I should bear with you :

15 But if it be a question of words and names, and *of* your law, look ye to it ; for I will be no judge of such *matters*.

16 And he drave them from the judgment seat.

17 Then all the Greeks took <sup>p</sup> Sosthenes, the chief ruler <sup>p</sup> Cor. 1 : 1.

boldened the Jews to make this charge against Paul, while he was proconsul.

¶ *The deputy-proconsul.* Achaia comprised, at this time, the whole of Greece south of Macedonia and Epirus, and Corinth was the capital city. Grotius tells us that it was a senatorial province under Augustus, and was then, accordingly, governed by a proconsul. But Tiberius, A. D. 15, adjoined it to Macedonia, and made it an imperial province, whence it was governed by a procurator. But Suetonius informs us that Claudius restored this province to the Senate, so that it came again to be under a proconsul in Paul's time, which shows us how strictly accurate is Luke's record. Undesigned coincidences of this kind prove the authenticity of the book. ¶ *Made insurrection—rose up against.* ¶ *Judgment seat*—tribunal of Gallio. This was sometimes a fixed seat, and sometimes a movable seat or chair, which the governors carried about with them. See Notes, John 19 : 13. The letters said to have passed between Paul and Seneca are doubtless spurious.

13. *This (one) persuadeth*—(by persuasion excites.) The Jews were now allowed the observance of their religion by the Roman government, and they complain to the deputy that Christianity, even though professed by Jews, ought not to be included in this license, as if it were Judaism, since it was *contrary to the* (Mosaic) *law*, as well as to the Roman law. It was common at first, in the Roman Empire, to regard Christians as only a sect of the Jews. The term for worship is that which is commonly applied to Gentile proselytes.

14. *When Paul was now about to open his mouth*, (in his defense,) Gallio cut short the whole matter by refusing to hear the case. *If, indeed, it were an injustice*, (such as the law condemns,) *or a gross outrage*, (such as every one instinctively condemns.) Some understand the latter as referring to a charge of sorcery, which it was hinted by Gallio might be brought against Paul, and which the laws condemned. ¶ *Reason would*—lit., *reasonably* (patiently) *I would have borne with you* ; I would have thought it proper to hear the case fully—on both sides.

15. *But if it be a questioning about a doctrine, or names*, (as Jew, proselyte, Christian, Christ,) or more generally a dispute of words and terms merely, *and of the law which is among you*, (Jews,) *look ye to it*—or, ye shall see to it, and fight it out, and not I. So Lysias treated Paul's case, ch. 23 : 29 ; and Festus, ch. 25 : 20. So Pilate, John 19 : 31, 35. *For I do not wish to be a judge of these things*. He would have nothing to do with these Jewish questions and disputes, as he regarded them. This was the feeling of the Roman dignitaries toward Christianity.

16. *And—he drove them away from the judgment seat*—he positively and finally dismissed the case—and would hear nothing on the subject. **OBSERVE.**—Many of the world's rulers and great men affect to put off Christianity as a mere Jewish matter, and the Bible as a Jewish book. But the name of Christ is above every name, and to it every knee shall bow.

17. The Jews were enraged, doubt-

of the synagogue, and beat *him* before the judgment seat. And Gallio cared for none of those things.

18 ¶ And Paul *after this* tarried *there* yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having <sup>a</sup>shorn *his* head in <sup>r</sup>Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

<sup>7</sup> Num. 6: 18.  
<sup>h</sup> 1. 21: 24.  
<sup>r</sup> Rom. 16: 1.

less, at this summary dismissal of their complaint. But as though this were not enough, *all the Greeks* who had hoped for a defeat of the hated Jews, became emboldened against them, and took Sosthenes, the *chief ruler of the synagogue*, (as Crispus was, vs. 8,) probably one of the hereditary rulers. "All the Greeks" here were against "all the Jews," vs. 12. This Sosthenes may have been the same as 1 Cor. 1: 1, in which case he became a convert, as Crispus did; and Paul calls him "our brother." But the name was a common one, and we have no other ground than the name for supposing them to be the same person. ¶ *But, none of these things were of any concern to Gallio.* He cared nothing for the dispute, and perhaps not for the beating, though this latter was a wrong which it would seem he should have interfered with on his own principle. Thus was fulfilled to Paul the promise in the vision, that no one should set on him so as to hurt him. His accusers are here punished by the mob before the judgment seat, vs. 10. NOTE.—It is not meant that Gallio was an infidel, and cared nothing for religion, though this application has often been made of the passage. It simply denotes that he would not concern himself with these disputes of the Jews, as he considered it a mere question of Jewish controversy, with which his office in the State had nothing to do. So far he was right: as he says, (vs. 15,) "*for I do not wish to be a judge of these things.*" See ch. 25: 10.

‡ 29. PAUL'S FOURTH VISIT TO JERUSALEM BY WAY OF EPHESUS AND CENCHREA—(*Antioch in Syria*)—APOLLOS AT EPHESUS. A. D. 54. Ch. 18: 18-28.

18. It is now recorded that this tu-

mult did not drive Paul away, but rather encouraged him to go on with his work. God had plainly interposed for him, according to the promise. The Church was raised in public esteem, and had the protection of public authority. ¶ *A good while*—literally, sufficient days—as we say, "some time." His time came at length to leave the Corinthian brethren, (converts,) and he sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila. ¶ *Having shorn.* Cenchrea was the eastern harbor of Corinth, about ten miles from the city, where there was afterwards a Christian Church. There, on his way to Syria to visit Antioch by way of Jerusalem, and the temple, he shaved his head, for he had a vow. It is held by most, that this could not have been the Nazarite's vow, for that required the shaving of the head at Jerusalem at the end of the time. Num. 6: 1, 21. But may not Paul so far have asserted his liberty in the Jewish observance, and may not this be a reason for making this express record of his having shorn his head at this place, when according to the Jewish law, he would have been bound to do it at the temple? It is urged by Baumgarten, that he took the Nazarite's vow in token of his confessed weakness and dishonor in God's service, (see 1 Cor. 9: 22; 4: 10; 2 Cor. 11: 11,) renouncing the world and all self-dependence, and holding himself in subjection to God, as the woman is subject to the man. 1 Cor. 11: 3. He would offer this thank-offering for the success of the Gospel among the Gentiles, and on the Pentecost, the day of first fruits. Josephus speaks of private vows on occasion of some deliverance or other signal mercy, by which the Jew bound himself to offer sacrifice in the temple within thirty days, and to shave ~~the~~

19 And he came to Ephesus, and left them there : but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

20 When they desired *him* to tarry longer time with them, he consented not ;

21 But bade them farewell, saying, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem : but I will return again unto you, 'if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

22 And when he had landed at Cesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

head and abstain from wine. See ch. 21 : 23, 24, 26 ; 24 : 17. *Salmasius* thinks that this was a private vow of Paul that he would not cut his hair till he came to Cenchrea—that is, that he would let his hair grow after the Gentile fashion till he reached that port on his way to Judea, showing that to the Jews he became a Jew, &c. That this could not have been Aquila who had vowed, is plain from the connection of the terms, where Paul is the subject throughout.

19. *Ephesus*. He could have reached this port in two or three days. This was the capital at this time of the Roman proconsular province of Asia, situated opposite to Corinth, on the western shore of Asia Minor. Here was the great temple of Diana. Paul left Aquila and Priscilla there at Ephesus—that is, to remain there. *But he himself* (before leaving) *entered into the synagogue*, (which was there,) *and reasoned with the Jews*. Even on his journey he could not refrain from seeking out the synagogue and proclaiming to the Jews the Gospel of Christ.

20, 21. The Jews here were favorably impressed, either by his reasonings or by his shorn head, and they urged him to tarry longer. But he did not give assent ; but assigned as a reason for his refusal, *It is necessary for me by all means to keep (perform) the feast that is coming (approaching) in Jerusalem*. This was probably the Pentecost, as navigation would have been very dangerous at Passover, and the feast of Tabernacles would not have allowed time for the journey, which he made before reaching Ephesus at the close

of the year. ¶ *Return*. Paul saw encouragement enough to make him promise to return to them, God willing. Here was a great door of usefulness opened, at a great centre of influence. 1 Cor. 16 : 9. ¶ *If God will*. See James 4 : 13–15. It was the custom of primitive Christians, very commonly to qualify their engagements by this proviso, according to the Apostle James, and to such inspired example as this. So also Rom. 1 : 10 ; 15 : 32 ; 1 Cor. 4 : 19 ; 16 : 7 ; Heb. 6 : 3. Paul did return, and so important was this step, that Luke hastens to record the facts and results, ch. 19 : 1. ¶ *Sailed from Ephesus*, to Cesarea, which would require a month at least. In chs. 20, 21, it is a seven weeks' voyage. But deductions are to be made for sojourns on the way, in all some three weeks.

22. *Cesarea*. On the Mediterranean coast, (see ch. 8 : 40,) the most convenient sea-port near Jerusalem, and whence Paul afterwards set sail for Rome, ch. 25 : 6 ; 27 : 1. ¶ *Gone up*, to Jerusalem, as the term implies. ¶ *The Church*—the Mother Church at Jerusalem. He *saluted* (literally, embraced) *the Church*, and probably gave a full report of the progress of the Gospel in Europe. If this were not a visit to Jerusalem, it does not appear that he went there, though to keep the feast there, was declared by him to be the great object of his journey, and the reason of his haste, vss. 20, 21. The going up and going down, are terms which apply to Jerusalem. ¶ *Antioch*. This was the seat of the Mother Church of Gentile Christendom, where Paul had labored with Barnabas,

23 And after he had spent some time *there*, he departed, and went over *all* the country of <sup>a</sup> Galatia and Phrygia in order, <sup>x</sup> strengthening all the disciples.

<sup>a</sup> Gal. 1:2, and 4:14.  
<sup>x</sup> ch. 14:22, and 15:32, 41.  
<sup>y</sup> 1 Cor. 1:12, and 3:5, 6, and 4:6.  
Titus 3:13.

24 ¶ And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

25 This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being <sup>a</sup> fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, <sup>a</sup> knowing only the baptism of John.

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 12:11.  
<sup>a</sup> ch. 19:3.

and where the disciples were first called Christians. It is supposed by some that Paul had his difficulty with Peter here, at this visit, (Gal. 2:11.) NOTE.—Paul had also collected alms for the poor Jews in Jerusalem, and this was part of his errand to the Holy City.

PAUL'S THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY THROUGH GALATIA, PHRYGIA, &c.—APOLLOS AT EPHESUS. A. D. 54. Nero Emperor. (Vs. 23–28.)

23. The narrative of Paul's third missionary journey is here given in very general terms. *After he had spent some time there*, (in Antioch,) *he departed and went through in* (successive) *order, the Galatian and Phrygian country*, (district,) *strengthening all the disciples*. Ch. 3:1. OBSERVE.—This visit of Paul to Antioch seems to have been the last. The centre of the Gentile Church moved westward more and more. Already it becomes more European than Asiatic, till it reaches to Rome.

24. Luke passes by the details of Paul's journey through Galatia and Phrygia, and comes at once to his sojourn in Ephesus. This he introduces by a notice of *Apollos*, who came to Ephesus before Paul reached there. He was born at Alexandria, in Egypt, where there was a large population of Jews; so much so, that they had called for a translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek tongue nearly three centuries before Christ. It was the seat of the famous Alexandrian school, where the highest advantages of learning were enjoyed. The Alex-

andrian library was the greatest in the world. ¶ *Eloquent*. He possessed a rare power of speech, which eminently qualified him to be a *waterer of seed* which such an one as Paul had planted. (1 Cor. 3:6.) ¶ *Mighty*. He had not only this fluency and power of argument, but he was *thoroughly versed in the Scriptures*, and able to wield this sword of the Spirit with mighty effect.

25. *Instructed*. This man had been instructed—same term as Luke 1:4—literally, *catechetically taught* (that is, before coming to Ephesus,) *in the way of the Lord*, as prepared by John the Baptist. (Matt. 3:3; Mark 1:3.) He had been taught by John, or by some of his followers, as to the Messiahship of Christ, and knew some leading facts of His life, doctrines, and miracles. But probably he had heard nothing of the death, resurrection, and ascension, and certainly knew nothing to purpose of the Spirit's outpouring at Pentecost. *And being fervent* (boiling) *in the spirit*, (the same phrase as Rom. 12:11,)—burning with desire to promote the cause of Christ, so far as he knew it—he *spake and taught diligently* (accurately) *the things of the Lord* in the light of *John's baptism*, which was as far as he had advanced. He was thus an immature disciple—a sort of half-way Christian—in transition from the Old covenant to the New.

[This paragraph, with that which follows, ch. 19:1, forms, thus, a very interesting link between the Gospels and the Acts, and shows us the case of certain *in the transition state*; such as needed only to be further instructed in order to receive the full Gospel.]

26 And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue; whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

27 And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote: exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, <sup>b</sup>helped them much which had believed <sup>b</sup>1 Cor. 3:6. through grace:

28 For he mightily convinced the Jews, *and that publicly*, <sup>c</sup>shewing by the scriptures that Jesus *||* was Christ. <sup>c</sup>ch. 9:22, and 17:3, and vs. 5. <sup>d</sup>Or, is the Christ.

26. *He* (Apollos) *began*, as a native Jew, in their synagogue at Ephesus, to speak boldly as to the fulfillment of their prophetic Scriptures in Christ Jesus, and as to the leading facts of His life, urging His claims upon their reception. *Aquila and Priscilla heard* him discoursing there, and they, being thoroughly instructed in the Gospel system as a whole, *took him unto them and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately*. They opened unto him the Gospel system in its fullness and completion, as comprising the baptism of the Holy Ghost, in the name of the Risen Christ. **OBSERVE.**—(1) The duty of private Christians to teach in their sphere what they know of Christ; and the importance of that instruction which private Christians, male and female, can give in their private and social relations. (2) How many wilderness disciples there are who know Christ only in part, and have stopped at the baptism of repentance, (Heb. 6:1,) laying always the foundations and not going on toward perfection.

27. *Disposed. He desiring to pass through into Achaia*—and to Corinth, the chief city—the *brethren* (Aquila and others of the Ephesian Church,) *wrote, urging the disciples* (at Corinth) *to receive him*—and these letters of commendation would have great weight, coming from those who were so well acquainted at Corinth. Paul, in his Epistles to the Corinthians, testifies of what is here recorded, that Apollos, when he arrived at Corinth, *helped much those who had become believers* (under Paul's ministrations,) *through grace* “Paul planted”—did the first

work of teaching and ingathering—“Apollos watered” what Paul had planted, and aided those who already believed, in maintaining their cause against the Jews. See 1 Cor. 3:5, 22; 4:6; 1 Cor. 1:12.

28. Apollos was greatly useful *in convincing* (confuting) *the Jews mightily* (powerfully)—(by his mightiness in the Scriptures, vs. 24, utterly overthrowing their arguments,) *publicly*, (in the synagogue,) *showing* (proving) *by the Scriptures* (in which he was so well versed and powerful,) *that the Messiah is Jesus*. He demonstrated by his expositions of the types and prophecies, that Jesus answered to all the Old Testament representations of the Messiah; and was the very Messiah who was predicted. **OBSERVE.**—(1) Ministers of Christ ought to be thoroughly acquainted with the Scriptures, familiar with their language and sense, and masters of the whole Word of God. (2) Eloquence, together with this Scriptural knowledge, is of great importance for a successful exhibition of the truth. (3) While Apollos was so serviceable, he was the innocent occasion of party strife, being held up as a leader by a class of admiring followers, and even as a rival to Paul himself. See 1 Cor. 1:12. Eminent ministers may thus be put in the place of Christ, and serve to excite jealousies and rivalries among the people. 1 Cor. 3:5. (4) Many private Christians could bring forward those who shall preach Christ, (vs. 26.) (5) We need to preach Christ out of the Scriptures, from a profound, personal knowledge of the Gospel.

## CHAPTER XIX.

<sup>a</sup> 1 Cor. 1:12,  
and 3:5, 6.

1 AND it came to pass, that while <sup>a</sup>Apollus was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus; and finding certain disciples,

<sup>c</sup> ch. 8:16.  
<sup>d</sup> See 1 Sam. 3:7.

2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, <sup>c</sup>We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

<sup>d</sup> ch. 18:25.

3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, <sup>d</sup>Unto John's baptism.

## CHAPTER XIX.

2 30. PAUL THREE YEARS AT EPHE-  
sus—*Writes Epistle to Galatians and  
First Epistle to Corinthians, and proba-  
bly his First Epistle to Timothy and  
Epistle to Titus.* A. D. 54–57. Ch.  
19: 1–41.

Paul had promised to return to Ephesus, God willing, (18: 21,) and he reached there, by the good hand of God, during the year 54. This great city was to become a seat and centre of Christianity, where “the beloved disciple” was to labor as the last survivor of the twelve. Here magic arts were extensively practiced, aided of late, perhaps, by the prevalent expectations of some great one to come. Here was the magnificent temple of Diana, where the Greek idolatries were most extensively practiced, and where a large class of craftsmen made their living in furnishing articles for the worship of the goddess. Here again Paul was to come in contact with heathenism and with Judaism, as leagued against the Cross. Yet he came at the earnest solicitation of the Jews. This point was a great middle-point between Europe and Asia, where barbarism and Judaism intermingled.

1. Apollus is yet at Corinth, where he remained for some time, and Paul *having passed through the upper coasts* (parts—namely, the mountainous districts of Phrygia on the way,) *came to Ephesus*. He was accompanied by Timothy and others, vs. 22, 29. *And finding certain disciples* of the same class with Apollus, who were only partially instructed in Christianity—

though they are termed “disciples,” showing that as far as they knew, they were believers in Christ—he said, &c. At their distance from the events at Jerusalem, they were uninformed on the important point of the Spirit's descent, and of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and consequently of Christ's finished work.

2. *Have ye received.* Rather—*Did ye receive the Holy Ghost when ye believed?*—that is, did ye receive the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, (such as they received after their Christian baptism, vs. 6, 7.) ¶ *We have not.* Rather, *But* (on the contrary,) *we did not hear,* (at that time,) *if* (whether) *the Holy Ghost is*—(is come—is given.) In John 7: 39, the form of expression is the very same—“The Holy Ghost *was not*, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” The meaning, then, is, that at the time of their embracing Christianity, they did not know whether the Holy Ghost was come, as it was promised by John and Christ, and as it was experienced at Pentecost, when Jesus was glorified.

3. This confession would naturally call up the question of the kind of baptism they had received, since the Christian baptism is (and was from the beginning, it would seem,) “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” implying a profession of these three Persons in their distinct offices, and a knowledge of their work. John's baptism, however, was probably in a different form, and implied a different confession, viz. of Christ and the Spirit as to come, (see vs. 5.) ¶ *Unto John's baptism*—unto the

4 Then said Paul, \*John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

5 When they heard *this*, they were baptized 'in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6 And when Paul had <sup>e</sup>laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and <sup>h</sup>they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

<sup>e</sup> Matt. 3:11.  
John 1:15, 27,  
30.  
ch. 1:5, and 11.  
16, and 13: 24,  
25.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 8:16.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 6:6, and  
8:17.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 2:4, and  
10:46.

profession of that system of doctrine and practice which John preached—unto the name or discipleship of John. That, however, was only preparatory, as Paul goes on to explain, and their defect was that they stopped at John's doctrine, when they should have considered all that John foretold as having been fulfilled in Christ; as for example, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which John especially announced, Matt. 3:11.

4. It was John's work to preach to the people the duty of repentance, on account of Christ's being at hand, and to point Him out as the object of belief. So that John's baptism would require them to believe in Christ as having not only come, but also as having come to baptize with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, (Luke 3:16.)

5. *When they heard this* explanation of Paul, *they* (these disciples) *were baptized in* (unto) *the name of the Lord Jesus*. These are, doubtless, the words of Luke, and not of Paul. The question arises, whether re-baptizing was required in the case of all John's disciples who embraced Christianity? We do not read of any questions being asked at the Pentecost as to whether any of the three thousand had been baptized by John—nor do we read of the Apostles having been baptized at all. They had the higher baptism of the Holy Ghost, we know. And probably John's disciples, who received Christ fully when He came, were not re-baptized, because they fell in with the aim of John's baptism in believing on Christ and His finished work. But where, for any reason, they had stopped at John's baptism, then their after profession

of Christ was accompanied with baptism unto the name of Christ, as a public abandonment of their former position. OBSERVE.—There are many in the Church who may be called believers, who are only wilderness-disciples, and need to have the way of God expounded unto them more accurately and fully. They have not learned of the finished work of Christ, nor of the full furniture of the Spirit which He gives; and they are laying again the foundation of repentance, according to the wilderness career, instead of going on in a cheerful following of Jesus. They rather look forward to some finishing stroke yet to be given to Christ's work, instead of "beholding the Lamb of God," as John points Him out, and entering at once into a living, active, personal fellowship with Christ. They need to attain to the higher Christian platform for the higher Christian life. See John 1:35–39.

6. The Apostolic office and work of Paul were now to be attested also, for the aid of the Church and of his service in Ephesus. There is no pattern in this act for "confirmation" now-a-days, as this laying on of hands was done by an Apostle, and as it was done to communicate miraculous gifts. ¶ *They spake with tongues, and prophesied*. They spake in languages which they had not learned, (as was done at Pentecost,) and in high ecstatic strains they spake the wonderful works of God, and they gave out inspired declarations of the Divine will. Ch. 10:46. Some understand that these were set apart as ministers. ¶ *The number*. There is a reason for thus particularly giving the number. Perhaps it is that thus they



ch. 17:2 and  
18:4.

2 ch. 1:3, and  
28:23.  
12 Tim. 1:15.  
2 Peter 2:1.  
Jude 10.  
m See ch. 9:2,  
and 22:4, and  
24:14.  
vs. 23.

7 And all the men were about twelve.

8 <sup>1</sup>And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things <sup>\*</sup>concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But <sup>1</sup>when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil <sup>m</sup>of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

may stand out more impressively to view as a connecting link between the Gospels and the Acts—as a new “*twelve*” in this transition from John to Christ.

8. *The synagogue.* Paul’s labors were first among the Jews, as was his habit; and, besides, they had invited him, (ch. 18 : 20.) ¶ *Spake boldly.* He preached with great freedom and fearlessness for *three months*—especially on their Sabbath days. ¶ *Disputing and arguing*—out of the Scriptures, that Jesus was the predicted Messiah, &c. and that the promised restoration of the kingdom (ch. 1 : 6, 8,) was to be accomplished in Him. ¶ *Persuading*—proving persuasively, the things, &c.—in regard to the Church of Christ, as the “Son of David,” “greater than Solomon.” Though the date of Paul’s Epistles cannot be fully settled, yet it would seem most probable that during this interval of his abode in Ephesus, Paul wrote

*The Epistle to the Galatians.*  
Ephesus. A. D. 55.

The Churches of Phrygia and Galatia had been planted on his second missionary journey, as we infer from ch. 16 : 6, (A. D. 51.) His Epistle to the *Galatians* was written soon after his second visit, and three years afterwards, (ch. 18 : 23,) Gal. 1 : 6. During this visit he had detected and exposed the seeds of those errors which came afterwards to grow and spread so seriously, as to call for his earnest reproof. Gal. 1 : 6 ; 4 : 13. Judaizing teachers were busy among them and with much success. The first great controversy

which sprang up in the Christian Church, arose from the Jewish converts, on the subject of justification. They insisted on a justification that was partly, at least, by works,—by the rites and observances of the law—and not by faith alone. And as the first converts were from the Jews, (to whom the Gospel was first preached,) they brought with them into the Christian Church such legal views, and sought to propagate them by Judaizing teachers. Paul, therefore, in this Epistle and that to the Romans, meets and overthrows this fundamental error, and establishes the doctrine which Luther has also shown to be the great test-doctrine of the Christian Church. These Galatians, who settled in Asia Minor from Gaul about B. C. 280, and mixed with Greek colonists, being of the German stock, this may be called an Epistle to the Germans—and the great expounder of it is the German LUTHER. We can appreciate these expostulations, rebukes and arguments in this letter of Paul to the Galatians, when we notice his discussions going on at the same time with these Jews at Ephesus.

9. *But, when some were hardened*—had become callous and obstinate by a willful rejection of the Gospel, and *disbelieved*. The term here means rather, *refused obedience* (to the Gospel command) as the result of disbelieving, which is expressed by a different term. ¶ *Spake evil.* This is not the same

10 And <sup>a</sup> this continued by the space of two years: so <sup>a</sup> See ch. 20: 31. that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And <sup>b</sup> God wrought special miracles by the hands of <sup>b</sup> Mark 16: 20. ch. 14: 3. Paul:

12 <sup>c</sup> So that from his body were brought unto the sick <sup>c</sup> ch. 5: 15. handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from <sup>c</sup> See 2 Kings 4: 29. them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

term with that rendered *blaspheming*, (ch. 13: 45,) but expresses the same sense, equivalent to the term "malediction" from the Latin. ¶ *That way.* The Christian doctrine and course of life—the way of salvation by Jesus Christ alone. This they did *before the multitude*—that is, in the synagogue—in a way to discourage his further labors in that assembly. This showed their hardness, that they sought to hinder others from believing. Accordingly Paul departed—rather, *withdrew and separated the disciples* into a company by themselves, so as to form a distinct body of disciples. See Matt. 7: 6; 10: 14. So he had done, ch. 18: 6. ¶ *Disputing (arguing) daily.* The same term is frequently used in this narrative to denote Paul's close arguments with the Jews, and answers to their objections. ¶ *Tyrannus* was probably a Gentile, and a public preacher or lecturer in philosophy or rhetoric, who had probably become a convert, and who gave up to Paul the use of his *school* or *hall*, so far as he needed for his purpose. Thus again the Apostle turns to the Gentiles in a formal manner, as before in the case of Justus at Corinth, (ch. 18: 6.) And all along is repeated what he had signified to him in the case of Publius and Elymas, at the threshold of his missionary work, that the Jew would reject and the Gentile would receive the Gospel.

10. *This continued, &c. Lit., This became, or came to pass, for two years*—this continuous exposition of the Scripture was carried on during two years, so that by means of Paul's labors and his assistants, vs. 6, and through those who heard him and circulated through the adjacent regions, all those who in-

habited Asia, the proconsular province so called, of which Ephesus was the capital, *heard the word of the Lord Jesus*—the Gospel of Christ, as proclaimed by Paul—and these were *both Jews and Greeks*—not only native Jews, but proselytes and other Gentiles, (called Greeks.) Ephesus was a great centre of commerce and religion, and resorted to by multitudes from all parts of the country. OBSERVE.—Paul's entire sojourn in Ephesus was *three full years*, ch. 20: 31. We have already two years and three months noted. After this Paul remained thereabouts, (vs. 22,) sending his companions into Macedonia before him, and did not leave finally until after the disturbance of Demetrius, ch. 20: 1.

11, 12. Paul's work here had also very special attestation, for Ephesus was the centre of magical juggleries, exorcisms, &c. by Pagans and Jews; and as at Samaria, so here, these gross impositions were to be confronted and confounded by the real, miraculous operations of Divine power. So the magicians of Egypt were overthrown by the miracles of Moses. (See 2 Tim. 3: 7.) ¶ *God wrought by the hands of Paul* (by his personal agency) *special miracles*—(literally, *miracles*—powers—not the happening, or casual,) not those ordinarily wrought by the Apostles, but extraordinary ones—as specified in the next clause—no more truly miraculous, but more strikingly so, as they were wrought without the presence of the Apostle, and showed the exclusive power of God in the work. ¶ *Handkerchiefs*—literally, *sweat cloths*, elsewhere rendered napkins, (John 20: 7,) and more generally meaning any cloth. ¶ *Aprons*—a sort of *half-girdle*, such

¶ Matt. 11 : 27.  
 ¶ See Mark 9 :  
 88.  
 Luke 9 : 49.

13 ¶ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

as servants and workmen used. It was either one or the other, or any kind of garment. These were the means which God chose, that "the excellency of the power might be of God," and not even of the Apostles. (2 Cor. 4 : 7.) We are not to suppose that the people superstitiously used these means, and that God in mercy honored thus their superstitious measures. But that as with the woman who touched the hem of His garment, (Matt. 23 : 6,) He allowed the healing power to be communicated by such feeble means, where they had faith as she had to say, "If I but touch," &c., so that the work might be more extensive and striking and special, to suit the case and furnish the extraordinary evidence needed there. Hence we see, it was not to encourage superstition, (Romish or Ephesian, Jewish or Pagan,) but to confront and overthrow it, that this was done. How then can Papists from this passage find a warrant for miracles of relics? ¶ *So that from his body (skin, to which they were touched,) were brought unto (upon) the sick, these articles whether Paul's or theirs, and though at their instance, yet with his compliance. The diseases departed—(literally, were gotten rid of,) and the evil spirits, (literally, the spirits, the evil,) demoniacal possessions which were not natural diseases, but preternatural possessions, went out of them.*

13. As in the case of Elymas the sorcerer, at Paul's first outstart, (ch. 13 : 8,) so here, the Jew acts the part of a pagan and unbeliever, while the Gentile turns to God, as one of the true Israel, vs. 19. The Jew even abuses the name of Jesus, using it for his magical incantations, in the spirit

of Simon Magus, (ch. 8 : 21.) ¶ *Some of the strolling Jews—(who wandered about the country, practicing their juggleries.) ¶ Exorcists. See Matt. 12 : 27. Josephus speaks of this class of impostors, and thus confirms the Gospel history, by showing the opinions that prevailed in his day, as to the reality of demoniacal possessions.—Antiq. viii. 2, 5; B. J. vii. 6, 3. ¶ Took upon them—undertook. They pretended by the magic use of names and terms to command the demons out. They had seen Paul perform miracles in the name of Christ. ¶ We assure—we charge, or bind you as with an oath—by an imprecation—by the Jesus whom Paul preacheth. Like Simon Magus, they thought Paul's wonder-working was only a higher kind of magic than theirs, using a more potent name. But the power is not in any spell of formularies, or manipulations, Pagan or Papal. Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Origen and other early fathers, speak of such impostors.*

14. An instance is now given, it may have been the principal one. ¶ *There were certain seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, a high priest, who did this. The number seven was sacred, and they being seven sons, may have based some pretensions upon this, which would account for its being mentioned. This Sceva was probably the chief of the Jewish people who were resident at Ephesus, or more likely, chief of one of the twenty-four courses. This case presents the Jewish apostasy and rejection of Christ in a strong light, and thus fulfills what was intimated in the specimen case at Paphos, ch. 13 : 6.*

15. So far from this impious imposture succeeding, the evil spirit (thw

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was, leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

<sup>a</sup> Luke 1:65,  
and 7:16.  
ch. 2:43, and  
5:5-11.  
<sup>b</sup> Matt. 3:6.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

adjudged, vs. 13,) *answered* (as a real, personal being, yet speaking, perhaps, by the voice of a man,) *Jesus I know*, (as they said of Christ Himself, "I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of God,") *and Paul I know well*, (I understand as a wonder-worker, and sent by God,) *but who are ye?* I do not know you, nor recognize your claim. Thus the evil spirit turned back upon them with contempt. Thus even the devils were witnesses to Christ, and witnesses against the false pretenders to Divine authority.

16. More than this, the devil was even an avenger of God's abused name, and acting through the man, (the possessed one,) *leaping upon them, and mastering them, prevailed against them*, (instead of their prevailing to cast him out,) so that they *fled out of that house, naked and wounded*, carrying the evidences and marks in their persons, of their utter defeat, under the preternatural power of the devil. Ragged, or perhaps totally stripped and bloody, and terrified, they were a frightful spectacle, calculated to strike terror into the minds of the multitude, and especially of their followers.

17. And so it proved—literally, *this became known*. The effect upon all classes was electric, and brought honor upon that name that they had impiously profaned; while Paul's wonder-working was proved to be from God, and not from any magic. Where are the modern skeptics who would fain believe that the miracles were juggleries, or wrought by animal magnetism? Not only the Jews, who were

such hostile rejecters, but the Gentiles also, were impressed with a salutary fear in respect of Divine things, and the result was, that the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified by the very means used to profane it.

18. The effect upon the converts was even more marked—literally, *many of them which had believed, came and confessed*, (publicly,) *and acknowledged their deeds*. Those who had lately been converted from such pagan practices, came openly forward and made a public exposure of the frauds which they had themselves formerly used to delude the people. And this confession from those who were lately from their own ranks, would naturally have great weight in overthrowing these abominations. OBSERVE.—This was no private, auricular confession; but an open, public renunciation and exhibition.

19. *Many*, (see vs. 18,)—literally, *sufficient*—a goodly number. This is a different class from the former, and refers to the magicians who abounded in Ephesus, using charms and incantations, here called *curious arts*—literally, *practicing the recondite*, (overwrought things.) They used "Ephesian letters," so called, which were alleged to have power over evil spirits. These sorcerers were so moved by what had occurred, (vs. 10,) that they brought together the books of magic, which contained their charms, mysteries and formularies of incantation, the inscriptions for amulets, and treatises on the subject—and burned them before all—publicly. The term seems to imply

u ch. 6: 7, and  
12: 24.  
a Rom. 15: 25.  
Gal. 2: 1.  
y ch. 20: 22.

20 \*So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

x ch. 18: 21, and  
23: 11.  
Rom. 15: 24-28.  
a ch. 13: 5.  
b Rom. 16: 23.  
2 Tim. 4: 20.

21 ¶ \*After these things were ended, Paul \*purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, \*I must also see Rome.

22 So he sent into Macedonia two of \*them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and <sup>b</sup>Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

that they threw them one by one upon the fire. Tonstal, Romish bishop of London, burned publicly, at Paul's cross, the first edition of the English Bible, by Tyndale. ¶ *Counted—they reckoned—cyphered—literally, their prices—and they found (the total) fifty thousand of silver money.* This is taken by some to be the drachma, which passed for a Roman denarius, say fifteen to seventeen cents of our money, equal to seven or eight thousand dollars. They were manuscript rolls, and rare, and hence very costly.

20. *So mightily*—literally, *thus, with overcoming power, the word of God* (the Gospel of Christ,) *grew* (extended, spread,) *and prevailed*, as where a citadel is taken by military force.

21. Paul was now, at this stage of affairs, purposing to revisit Macedonia, whither he had gone at the call of the man in vision, and carried forward the great European mission with much success, (ch. 16: 9.) He was even planning to extend his labors as far as Rome. ¶ *Ended*—literally, *fulfilled*. ¶ *Purposed in the spirit*—in his mind, and doubtless as influenced by the Holy Spirit—*when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia*. Greece was divided into these two districts at this time. In the former Paul had planted Churches in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea. In the latter, Corinth, the capital city, was the seat of a most important Church of his planting, and he desired to revisit them all. Here is the first intimation of his extensive plan, as referred to in Rom. 15: 25-28, for visiting Rome and Spain, including this journey. From Rom. 15: 26, we learn that his object was to make a

collection in the Churches of Greece for the poor saints in Jerusalem, as he had been charged to do by the Church of Antioch. See 1 Cor. 16: 1-9. ¶ *I must—it is necessary*, according to the Divine plan, by which, as a missionary to the Gentiles, he felt that he ought to visit the metropolis of the Gentile world, (see Rom. 1: 15,) and also, because of his interest in the Church already established there, perhaps by converts from the first Christian Pentecost, ch. 2: 10.

22. He sent in advance of him *Timothy and Erastus, two of those who ministered unto him*. The term rendered *ministered*, means *deaconed*, and though often used in a general sense, implies here a service in the taking of the collections, as enjoined in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, ch. 16: 1. Erastus is probably the same as is mentioned Rom. 16: 23; 2 Tim. 4: 20, chamberlain of Corinth. We infer that Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla were with Paul at Ephesus at this time. ¶ *But he himself*. Paul states in his letter to the Corinthians, that he purposed to stay at Ephesus till after Pentecost, 1 Cor. 16: 8. ¶ *Stayed*. Literally, *held back unto Asia for a time*, which seemed to intimate that he not only stayed a while in Ephesus, the capital of Proconsular Asia, as appears from the following paragraph, but stayed with a view to carry the Gospel further into those parts. He may have been prevented from doing this by the outbreak here narrated. (The Apostle here meets with *Gentile opposition*, which is put down by friendly interference of officers.)

Shortly after this sending of Timothy, see 1 Cor. 14: 11, and toward the

23 And <sup>a</sup> the same time there arose no small stir about <sup>b</sup> that way. <sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. 1:8. <sup>d</sup> See ch. 9:2.

24 For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought <sup>e</sup> no small gain unto the craftsmen; <sup>f</sup> ch. 16:16-19.

close of his residence in Ephesus, Paul wrote

*The First Epistle to the Corinthians.* Ephesus. A. D. 57.

In this Epistle, ch. 16:3, 5, he refers to his purpose of passing through Macedonia to Jerusalem, as Luke records in vs. 21 of this chapter; also, of sending Timothy, ch. 16:10, as Luke mentions here, vs. 22. He also very strikingly refers to the fact just recorded by Luke, (vs. 20,) when he says, (1 Cor. 16:9,) "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."

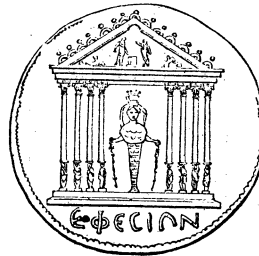
It would seem from several passages that he had visited the Corinthian Church a second time before this, probably during this three years' residence at Ephesus. 2 Cor. 13:1; 12:14. The immediate occasion of this first Epistle, was the distressing report brought him concerning the Church, (and perhaps in reply to a letter of theirs; 1 Cor. 7:1,) by certain members of the family of Chloe. Accordingly he wrote to rebuke (1) Their party spirit, which split up the Church into factions, into followers of Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ. (2) Their laxity in Church discipline, ch. 5. (3) Their habit of going to law before heathen magistrates, ch. 6:1-11. (4) The practice of fornication as a relic of idolatrous usages, ch. 6:12-20. He answers their inquiries (ch. 7:1,) about the marriage relation, and marriages with heathen, divorce

&c., ch. 7:1-40. Then he charges them against conformities with heathen worship in every form and degree, ch. 8:1-18, and against their irregularities in public worship, (ch. 8:1-16; 11:17-34.) Then follows a treatise on spiritual gifts, 12:1-31—Christian love, 13:1-13—prophesying, and tongues, 14:1-40. The resurrection, 15:1-36.

By means of this Epistle we get an insight into the conflict which was going on between Christianity and heathenism, and the peculiar difficulties that were, and are still, to be met in establishing the Christian Church in such an idolatrous and corrupt community, amidst the specious refinements of a polished paganism.

23. *And—but there happened about that time,* (of his planning to do this,) *no small disturbance concerning the way—* (viz. Christianity—the way of salvation, vs. 9,) ch. 9:2—"the way of the Lord." *Wicklif.*

24. The occasion of the uproar is here narrated. Paul's preaching interfered with the traffic in silver models of the temple of Diana, and thus broke up their gains. These models of the



25 Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, *Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.*

26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that 'they be no gods, which are made with hands :

27 So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought ;

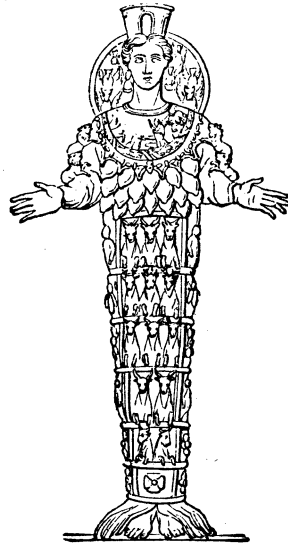
temple, and statue of Diana, (or Artemis,) were extensively manufactured and sold, even abroad, for charms for placing in private houses and carrying on journeys. ¶ *Silver shrines*—literally, *silver temples*—models of the temple, or little houses—caskets for stat-

this temple. Diana, or Artemis, was worshiped at Ephesus as the Goddess of Nature. ¶ *Brought no small gain to the artisans*—or masters of the craft.

25. *Whom having assembled, and the workmen about such things, (whom the masters employed,) he said*—appealing to their pecuniary interests, on the principle that it was an infringement of their natural rights to have their business interfered with. So men of our day plead against Christianity and the Sabbath laws, that they interfere with their sales and gains.

26. Here is a striking testimony by enemies of Christianity as to the wonderful progress it was making, through the preaching of Paul. The effects were manifest in the great decrease of this traffic in images, &c.; and that not alone of Ephesus, but almost all Asia, this Paul having persuaded, (convinced and attracted,) has turned away a great multitude, (from this worship,) saying that they are no gods, those made by hands. The idolaters held that the images and idols were gods. (See ch. 17 : 29.) The worshippers of images and pictures profess to use them only as aids to devotion, but it amounts to their regarding them as gods. So we have seen Romanists kneeling in most earnest gestures of prayer before the statue of Peter in St. Peter's at Rome, and before statues of the Virgin every where in Italy and other Romish countries. The educated classes of the heathen supposed that the images were inhabited by gods.

27. *But not only this our department (of business) is in danger of coming into reprobation, (as would be the case if the worship should be abandoned,) but also (there is danger) that the temple—literally, be counted for nothing—and that there will be destroyed the magnifi-*



ettes of Diana. (So the Romish Church traffics in pictures and models in honor of "the Virgin," who is worshiped as a "great goddess," "Queen of Heaven," &c.) This temple was one of the seven wonders of the world—four hundred and twenty-five feet by two hundred and twenty-five—rich in marbles—surrounded by one hundred and twenty-seven columns sixty feet high. We saw four columns of green jasper in the Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople, which were taken from

but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipped.

28 And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

29 And the whole city was filled with confusion : and having caught <sup>g</sup> Gaius and <sup>h</sup> Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

<sup>g</sup> Rom. <sup>g</sup> 23.  
<sup>h</sup> Cor. 1 : 14.  
A ch. 20 : 4, and  
27 : 2.  
Col. 4 : 10.  
Phil. 24.

30 And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31 And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

*cence of her whom all Asia and the (population of the) world worship—her gorgeous image-worship will perish. The temple was founded B. C. 550, by the joint contributions of the Ionian cities of Asia, who shared in the boast of her perfection. The temple was burnt on the night of Alexander's birth, B. C. 356, and rebuilt with greatest magnificence. Worshipers flocked thither from all parts of the world. OBSERVE.—Gain was the first plea. The second was piety, mixed with pride of this universal religion.*

28. This appeal was artful, and had the desired effect—inflaming them to the highest pitch of wrath against Paul and the Christians—and *they kept crying out, Diana of the Ephesians is great. The Ephesian's (goddess) Diana is great.* It is an ascription of greatness to her, and was probably a current formula used in her praise, as the Mohammedans say, "God is one God, and Mohammed is His Prophet." The worship of Diana was broken down at Ephesus. But afterwards that of the Virgin Mary was set up instead, as it was the tradition that she was buried there. The games in honor of Diana were held in May; and this same month is the month of the Virgin in the Romish Church, now.

29. The turmoil now increased. *And the whole city was filled with tumult, and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized (along, as they*

went—probably crowding them in along with them,) *Gaius, &c.* See Rom. 16 : 23; 1 Cor. 1 : 15, where Gaius is spoken of as a resident of Corinth; yet he may have been the same person. See ch. 20 : 4, a Gaius of Derbe. ¶ *Aristarchus.* See Col. 4 : 10; Philem. 24. He is described as a Macedonian of Thessalonica, chs. 20 : 4; 27 : 2. ¶ *The theatre*—or amphitheatre—was a common structure of that time in all chief cities of the Empire, and was used for public assemblies, either for business or exhibitions. It was open to the sky, with circular rows of stone seats sloping to the top of the wall. This is the style of those at Pompeii, and at Herculaneum and Milan. It is computed that this one at Ephesus would hold thirty thousand people. From it they could see the temple.

30. Paul *wished to enter in unto the people*, now gathered in the popular assembly *in the amphitheatre*, for though they were riotously assembled, he was conscious of right, and hoped probably to satisfy them of his good intentions; and he would naturally be very anxious for his companions. But *the disciples, the Ephesian converts, did not permit him* so to do. They feared for the life of Paul in such a wild tumult of the heathen.

31. Here is recorded a remarkable interference on his behalf by the *Chiefs of Asia*. These were officers chosen from the wealthier classes in the chief



32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly were confused: and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

33 And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And <sup>1</sup>Alexander <sup>2</sup>beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34 But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

35 And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is <sup>†</sup>a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter?

cities to superintend and provide for the games and festivals, annually held in honor of the gods and emperors. There were ten of these chiefs in Proconsular Asia. It is remarkable, that these should have come forward at such a juncture as Paul's friends. Such an impression had his upright character and steadfast principle made upon these chief officers of the heathen worship. They knew the great risk he would encounter, and they exhorted him not to give (present) himself in the amphitheatre. Though these men were probably not Christians, it is plain that Christianity was influential with some of the heads of society. (1 Cor. 1:26.)

32. Pausing now to notice the proceedings of the assembly, Luke narrates the riotous confusion that prevailed. See vs. 29. *The majority knew not on what account they had come together.* This verse gives a most graphic description of a mob.

33. *And from the crowd they thrust forth Alexander—the Jews urging him forward.* Many think that this was a step taken by the Jews, in the midst of the agitation and in fear of the popular fury. They put forth this man as their advocate, to show that they had no sympathy with Paul's movements. It would seem, however, that he was a Christian convert, and thus maliciously thrust forward by the Jews as a mark for the popular vengeance.

(This may have been Alexander the coppersmith, mentioned 2 Tim. 4:14, who after all did Paul much evil.) Hence he attempted—literally, *to speak in defense.* But they knowing that he was a Jew, (and hence that they could expect no favor for their idolatries,) there was one voice from all, crying as for two hours, "Great," &c.

35. *The townclerk—recorder—keeper of the public records, an office of high authority.* He having quieted the crowd, by his official interference, addressed them in a very apt speech—that their outbreak was undignified, since the whole city worshiped the goddess, and the worship would not likely be overthrown by these few men. It was unjustifiable, since they were not making any profane assaults upon the goddess. It was unnecessary, as Demetrius, if he had any damages to charge against these Christians, had his redress at the common court. Besides, it was dangerous, since such an uproar exposed the city to serious charges by the Roman authorities. OBSERVE.—This was an important testimony from head-quarters in favor of the missionaries. ¶ *Worshiper.* The term here used meant originally temple-sweeper, but came afterwards to mean custodian, sacristan—having charge of the temple. Though thirteen cities of Asia had an interest in it, Ephesus was honored with its guardianship. ¶ *And of*

36 Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37 For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

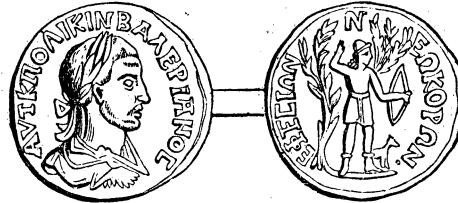
38 Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, || the law is <sup>|| Or, the court days are kept.</sup> open, and there are deputies : let them implead one another.

39 But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, || Or, ordinary. it shall be determined in a || lawful assembly.

40 For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

*the image which fell.* The wooden idol was so ancient, that the idolatrous priests held that it fell from heaven. So

the Romanists pretend that some of their pictures were made without hands and are miraculous. This coin of



Ephesus represents Diana in her Grecian character as a huntress; and the inscription uses this very title (Neokoros) and applies it to the Ephesians.

36. He exhorted them to have becoming confidence in their cause, and in these undeniable facts just mentioned. ¶ *It is needful that ye be composed, and do nothing precipitately.*

37. He declares that these men had not been aggressors—that they had made no direct assault upon the worship of Diana. ¶ *Robbers of churches—rather, temple robbers.* Wickliff reads *sacrilegers*. The Puritans, properly enough, objected to the common rendering here.—It was a capital crime to rob a temple, and the robber was left unburied. ¶ *Blasphemers.* Paul had not dealt in harsh denunciation, but had preached the Gospel, relying upon its power under God to break down all social evils.

38. *Wherefore.* There is, therefore, but one course to be pursued. If Demetrius and the artisans associated

with him, (against Paul,) have a matter (of complaint) against any one, the court-days are being held—stated days by the proconsul and his assistants, here called “deputies.” There are proconsuls at hand to try such cases, i. e. such an officer is accessible. *Let them implead each other*—let the opposing parties plead against each other.

39. But if ye demand any thing concerning other (matters,) it shall be determined (settled) in the lawful assembly. Such a riotous assembly could not lawfully transact business.

40. For. Since this assembly was an unlawful one, they were liable to be held to account by the Roman authorities, especially as they were proceeding against these men without just grounds. Thus he appeals to their fears. Literally, *for we are in danger to be accused of riot concerning the to-day—no offense existing concerning which we shall be able to render an account of this concourse.*

## 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

41. This officer having finished his apt appeal, *dissolved the assembly*, by authority. Here is a specimen of Gentile opposition. Unlike that of the Jews, it is reasoned down and the crowd dispersed. The "fighting" with beasts at Ephesus, (1 Cor. 15 : 32-34,) may belong hereabouts in the history. Aquila and Priscilla were also endangered, and left Ephesus about this time, Rom. 16 : 3, 4. Afterwards Paul had a solemn interview at Miletus with the elders of this Church, on his way to a last visit to Jerusalem, and he wrote an Epistle to this Church. Paul did not immediately leave Ephesus, but after this nothing is recorded until he was about to depart. We have notice of two years and three months, (vss. 8 and 10,) leaving nine months to make up the three full years, ch. 20 : 31. It is not improbable, therefore—though the date is much disputed—that Paul wrote during this time

*The First Epistle to Timothy.*  
Ephesus. A. D. 57.

In this Epistle, (vs. 3,) he refers to a charge given to Timothy to abide still at Ephesus when Paul went into Macedonia. This may have been the missionary excursion which he probably made to Corinth during his residence at Ephesus, and of which Luke, in the Acts, makes no mention. See Notes, vs. 22. This Pastoral Epistle would seem appropriate to the advance work upon which Paul now sent him into Macedonia—with Erastus—as a pair of those who ministered unto him, (vs. 22.) Now, as Paul would send him forward into Macedonia, while he himself abides at Ephesus for a season, he gives him a charge somewhat such as that which he gave him when he himself went into Macedonia and left Timothy to take care of the work at

Ephesus. He tells him (ch. 1 : 20,) of the defection of *Alexander*, (the coppersmith,) probably the one who was thrust forth at the riot in the amphitheatre. He anticipates coming thither himself shortly, ch. 4 : 13 ; 3 : 14, 15, and the state of things suits the condition of the Corinthian Church, to which he lately wrote and is soon to write again—as respecting Judaizers, ch. 1 : 7—immoralities, ch. 1 : 9, 10—disorder in the Churches on the part of women, ch. 2 : 9-15 ; ch. 5 : 1-17—masters and servants, ch. 6 : 1-3 ; see 1 Cor. 7 : 21-24—marriage, &c., ch. 5 ; see 1 Cor. ch. 7—false science, ch. 6 : 20 ; see 1 Cor. 1 : 22 ; 2 : 5, &c.—contributions, ch. 6 : 17-19 ; see 1 Cor. 16 : 1. The chronological difficulties are such, however, that many have concluded upon a later date, and have set the three Pastoral Epistles at a period subsequent to the history in the Acts, (A. D. 68,) on the theory of a second imprisonment of Paul at Rome, and supposing him to have been liberated after the first trial.—See *Conybeare* and *Howson*, Appendix vii. Unless we adopt this theory, we must suppose that during this interval Paul wrote, also,

*The Epistle to Titus.* Ephesus.  
A. D. 57.

This is also a Pastoral Epistle, is addressed to Titus at Crete, and concerns his work as a bishop or pastor in the Church. *Wieseler* thinks that Paul visited *Crete* on his excursion to *Corinth*, and left Titus there. In that case Titus must have returned by way of Corinth, so as to join Paul at Philippi

## CHAPTER XX.

1 AND after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto *him* the disciples, and embraced *them*, and <sup>a 1 Cor. 16:5.</sup> departed for <sup>1 Tim. 1:3.</sup> to go into Macedonia.

2 And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

## CHAPTER XX.

31. PAUL'S DEPARTURE FROM HIS FIELD IN PROCONSULAR ASIA—*Three months in Greece—Sails from Philippi toward Jerusalem—Writes Second Epistle to Corinthians at Philippi, and Epistle to Romans at Corinth.* A. D. 57. Ch. 20 to 21–14.

Paul is now approaching the close of his Missionary labors. Taking leave of Proconsular Asia, where he had been, in and about Ephesus, three years, he is about to journey to Macedonia and Greece, returning to Troas, and thence sailing to Jerusalem, by way of the coast islands, meeting the Ephesian Elders at Miletus.

1. *After.* Paul had purposed to go into Macedonia, and had already sent forward Timothy and Erastus, ch. 19: 22. But he was to remain in Ephesus until Pentecost, (1 Cor. 16: 8.) This he probably did, and without being hurried off by this disturbance. He took an affectionate leave of the Christian disciples, and, as the Greeks called it, “*embraced*” them and *went forth to go into Macedonia.*

2. *Those parts.* The region of Macedonia, comprising the Churches which he had planted at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, &c., round about unto Illyricum, (Rom. 15: 19,) or the confines of Illyria, see 2 Cor. 2: 12, 13; 7: 5, 6, whence it appears that he delayed at Troas, waiting for Titus—and preached there with success; but anxious for Titus, he broke off, and sailed for Macedonia, where at Philippi he was comforted by Titus’ coming. 2 Cor. 7: 6. Afterwards he sent Titus into Dalmatia, 2 Tim. 4: 10. At Philippi he received from Titus, whom he had sent to Corinth soon after Timothy, a report of the Corinthian Church, and of the effect upon him of his First

Epistle. See 2 Cor. 12: 18; 7: 13–15. Paul now writes

*The Second Epistle to the Corinthians.* Philippi. A. D. 57.

He here further rebukes the false teachers who were aiming to deny his Apostolical authority, and he lays down principles and rules which are of universal application in conducting controversies, and in promoting Christian liberality, ch. 3: 17; 6: 14–18; 10: 8; 13: 10; ch. 11.

*Much exhortation.* Literally, *having exhorted them with much speech.* His work was one of laborious ministerial and parochial duties among these Churches which he had planted. He then *came into Greece*—that is, Achaia, of which Corinth was the capital city—and *there*—chiefly in Corinth—he *abode three months.* During this three months’ sojourn, of which Luke gives no account in the Acts, Paul writes

*The Epistle to the Romans.* Corinth. A. D. 58.

This Epistle he sent by the hand of “*Phebe, a servant (deaconess) of the Church of Cenchrea,*” (Rom. 16: 1,) the eastern harbor of Corinth. He was not yet able to visit them, as he hoped to do, but had first to take the Gentile alms to Jerusalem, ch. 15: 26–29. In this Epistle he refers to the collection made by the Churches of Macedonia and Achaia, for the poor saints in Jerusalem, (ch. 15: 26,) which he was about soon to *carry up thither,*

1 ch. 9: 23, and  
23: 12, and 25: 3.  
2 Cor. 11: 26.  
e ch. 19: 29,  
and 27: 2.  
Col. 4: 10.  
d ch. 19: 29.  
e ch. 16: 1.  
f Eph. 6: 21.  
Col. 4: 7.  
2 Tim. 4: 12.  
Titus 2: 12.  
g ch. 21: 29.  
2 Tim. 4: 10.

3 And *there* abode three months. And <sup>b</sup>when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

4 And there accompanied him into Asia, Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, <sup>c</sup>Aristarchus and Secundus; and <sup>d</sup>Gaius of Derbe, and <sup>e</sup>Timotheus; and of Asia, <sup>f</sup>Tychicus and <sup>g</sup>Trophimus.

This was part of his object in this tour through these Churches, according to his commission from the Church at Antioch. Gal. 2: 10. It may be that the Church at Rome was the first that was planted in Europe, possibly by the converts at Pentecost, ch. 2: 10, though the Church at Philippi was the first planted by Paul. Already, at the writing of this Epistle, their "faith was spoken of throughout the whole world," (Rom. 1: 8,) and it is also most likely that early converts in Asia Minor and Greece made their way to this capital of the Empire, as the intercourse was easy and frequent between Rome and the provinces. See ch. 16: 3-16.

The object of the Epistle was to set forth the Gospel doctrine of justification by faith, as opposed to the legal notions of the Judaizers that salvation is by works of the law, whether it be by rites or moralities. He shows that a life of Christian obedience comes from faith in Christ, as the proper fruit of a living faith, and hence is essential to salvation, though only the finished work of Christ can be the meritorious ground of salvation. He shows, therefore, that the law is upheld and kept, not made void by faith; and that therefore the Jews ought to embrace Christ as the end and fulfilling of the law. See Ep. to Romans.

3. And *when*—literally, *but a plot from the Jews occurring against him, as he was about to sail into Syria*, direct

from the harbor of Cenchrea at Corinth, *the purpose came about of returning through Macedonia*. He thus changed his plan and went probably by Athens and Berea, ch. 17: 14, 15. What was the nature of this plot is not mentioned. The same spirit of Jewish hostility breaks out as before. The plot seems to have had some connection with his sailing into Syria, and perhaps it was an effort to deter him from going to the Holy Land, so that he had to take the land route in order to evade their scheming against him.

4. *There accompanied him*, &c. Though Paul generally had some companions, we nowhere else find so many as here—seven named besides Luke. ¶ *Into Asia—unto Asia*—to the borders of Asia—to Philippi, whence travelers crossed over to Asia. It would seem also that some of them, at least, went with him to Jerusalem; perhaps in order that he might take up thither living specimens of the Divine grace to the Gentiles, from the different regions where he had labored. And if so, was it not "to provoke the Jews to jealousy by them that were no people," Rom. 10: 19; 11: 13, 14—that the Jews might be brought in with the fullness of the Gentiles? ¶ *Sopater*, or *Sosipater*. See the same person, probably named, Rom. 16: 21. He was a specimen of the Bereans, whom Paul so highly commends. Ch. 17: 11. ¶ *Aristarchus*. See chs. 19: 29; 27: 2; Col. 4: 10; Philemon 24. He was from the Thessalonian Church, and was one of the bearers of the alms from Macedonia and Achaia to Jerusalem. Ch. 27: 2. ¶ *Secundus*. This person, also of the Thessalonian converts, is not elsewhere mentioned. ¶ *Gaius of Derbe*. This may be a different person from ch. 19: 9; though it would seem more likely that that one was an Asi-

5 These going before tarried for us at Troas.

6 And we sailed away from Philippi after <sup>a</sup>the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them <sup>1</sup>to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.

7 And upon <sup>2</sup>the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together <sup>1</sup>to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

atic, and thus the same with this. He may have changed his residence. See Rom. 16 : 23; 3 John 5-8. ¶ *Tychichus* was of *Asia*, and was a most trusty companion of Paul, sent with the Epistles to the Ephesians (Eph. 6 : 21,) and to the Colossians, (Col. 4 : 7,) at the same time. ¶ *Trophimus*. See ch. 21 : 29; 2 Tim. 4 : 20. He was an Ephesian, and many suppose that these last two were the only ones who accompanied Paul to Jerusalem. Three of these companions are Europeans, and four of them Asiatics. Of the four who were from Asia, the first two represent the remoter Churches of his earlier labors, Derbe and Lystra; and the last two, the more recent and eminent Church of Ephesus.

5. *These* (seven) *going in advance*—to prepare the Churches for Paul's visit, and perhaps to finish the collection of alms. ¶ *For us*—that is Paul and the narrator—who is thus proved to be not Timothy but Luke—who again joined Paul at Philippi, and again talks of "*we*" and "*us*," which had been dropped, ch. 16 : 17. He continued with Paul to the end of his life, and was a representative of the converted Gentiles. Col. 4 : 11, 14.

6. Luke, it seems, was at Philippi, where he had been engaged the few years previous. ¶ *Unleavened bread*—the *Passover*—which perhaps they would keep, only in a Christian spirit, as commemorating the death and resurrection of our Lord. See 1 Cor. 5 : 7. This was, that year, on the 28th March. They would have left about the 5th of April. "Christ, our *Passover*, is sacrificed for us." The early Jewish Christians observed the Jewish festivals at first in connection with the Christian Sabbath and Lord's Supper. ¶ *In (unto)*

*five days*. They were as long as five days on the voyage, though Paul had been only two days on the same voyage before, with a "straight course," (ch. 16 : 11,) or fair wind—here, perhaps, adverse. ¶ *Seven days*. They probably arrived some time on Monday.

7. Luke now relates Paul's preaching at Troas. ¶ *Upon the first*—literally, *on the one of the Sabbaths*. This phrase elsewhere means "on the first day of the week"—Matt. 28 : 1; Mark 16 : 2; Luke 24 : 1; John 20 : 1. This language implies that the disciples were wont to come together on that day for public worship, and it was adopted and sanctioned by the Apostles. See also 1 Cor. 16 : 2; Rev. 1 : 10. The practice began as early as the day of our Lord's resurrection, and we find the period of "an eight days," designating the time of their Sabbath worship. John 20 : 19, 26. The division of time into weeks, which since obtains among the *Gentiles*, as it is borrowed from the *Jewish* *Sevenday* period, shows that the Sabbath was observed by the early Christian Church. Justin Martyr, born at the beginning of the second century, speaks of the custom in the cities and the country to assemble for worship on the day known as Sunday—called "*the Lord's Day*." Rev. 1 : 10. ¶ *To break bread*. This is what the disciples met for at Jerusalem immediately after the Pentecost. And thus we see it was the same observance and worship still. See ch. 2 : 42. The Lord's Supper was dispensed in connection with an ordinary meal. Christ slept in the grave during the Jewish Sabbath, and buried it there with him; but He rose again and rested from His finished work, and thus made a new Sabbath—the *Lord's Day*. So Paul argues (Heb.

<sup>a</sup> Ex. 12 : 14, 15  
and 24 : 15.  
<sup>1</sup> ch. 16 : 8.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. 2 : 12.  
2 Tim. 4 : 13.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 16 : 2.  
Rev. 1 : 10.  
<sup>1</sup> ch. 2 : 47, 46.  
1 Cor. 10 : 16.  
and 11 : 20, &c.

ch. 1:13.

8 And there were many lights <sup>a</sup> in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

9 And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep; and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

<sup>1 Kings 17:21.</sup>  
<sup>2 Kings 4:34.</sup>  
<sup>o Matt. 9:24.</sup>

10 And Paul went down, and <sup>a</sup> fell on him, and embracing *him* said, <sup>o</sup> Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

4: 9, 10,) that there remaineth a rest—*Sabbatism*—keeping of Sabbaths—to the people of God, (both earthly and heavenly.) Christians would naturally celebrate that glorious event. And it had Apostolic authority and Christ's own sanction. The Jewish Sabbath was not denounced, but was meant to be superseded gradually by the Christian Sabbath. The change in the Sabbath day had been foreshadowed under the Old Testament by the sanctity attached to "*the day after the Sabbath*," as the day for the waving of the first fruits, (prefiguring Christ's resurrection,) and the day from which to begin the reckoning of the Pentecost—(Levit. 23:11–15.) So the eighth day was a Sabbath; Levit. 23:36, 39; Numb. 29:35; 2 Chron. 7:9.—Here, for the first time, we find barbarians and Greeks, Asiatics and Europeans, Jews and heathens, sitting down at the same table of the Lord—one family, one meal, one bread. Paul took occasion to discourse to the assembly about Christ and the Gospel. ¶ *Ready to depart on the morrow.* He had probably arrived on Monday, and seems to have waited for the Christian Sabbath, all ready, after his discourse and the Sabbath were over, to depart on his journey. Among the Greeks they adopted the Gentile division of time. This was our Sunday evening, as we understand it, and the morrow was Monday, of course. It is plainly recorded that Paul was ready to start, and waiting for the Christian Sabbath to be past before he should go on his journey. It would seem that he spent the whole day in discourse, by way of conversation and discussion, so that it continued into the night. Others have thought that they held their meetings at night, as

they did in times of persecution at Jerusalem, &c., (John 20:19.)

8. An incident is now recorded which led to a miraculous attestation of Paul's mission. ¶ *Many lights*—lit., *enough lamps*—a large number. ¶ *The upper chamber* was the room above stairs used for devotional purposes. It was so located as to be retired and free from disturbance. So the upper chamber in which Christ and the twelve kept the last Passover, and where the disciples held the prayer meeting, ch. 1:13. In this case it was on the third story, vs. 9. The lights are mentioned, to portray the scene as it was beheld by Luke, and perhaps, also, to show that the fall of the young man would be at once perceived.

9. *In a window.* Lit., *Upon the window*—on the window-sill. There was often but one window in such an apartment, making it more retired, and that opened toward Jerusalem. It was probably the usual projecting, bay-window, with lattice-work perhaps on a hinge, and as he leaned against this, it must have given way. The Oriental houses have no glass in the windows, and often no shutters. ¶ *Fallen. Being borne down by deep sleep, and as Paul was long preaching*—lit., *preaching upon more*—(longer, further)—*having been overpowered from the sleep, he fell down* (into the court or street below,) *from the third loft*—(lit., *frame story*.) This room was usually by itself, and higher than the rest of the house. ¶ *Taken up dead*—lit., *a corpse*. This is plainly a case of actual death. It is so stated—not of apparent death, nor of supposed death.

10. It was seen at once, and the alarm was given. Paul hastened down to

11 When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

12 And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.

13 ¶ And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul; for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

14 And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

where the dead man lay, and like Elijah and Elisha, he prostrated himself upon the dead body, 1 Kings 17 : 21; 2 Kings 4 : 34. ¶ *Embraced him*—enfolding him in his arms—a significant act to show the miraculous intent. ¶ *Said*. To the disciples, or to his friends. ¶ *Trouble not yourselves—do not make au ado*, as was the custom over the dead. He assured them that the young man was recovered to life from the dead. *His life is (now) in him*, though he had been *taken up dead*, Mark 5 : 39. Thus, in the midst of these Apostolic labors of Paul, an Apostolic miracle is recorded, as a seal of his mission, and a hint of what this Gospel does for sinners, saying, “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.”

11. *When*—literally, *and having ascended*—gone up (that is, Paul,) to the third story, where the exercises had been interrupted by this casualty, he proceeded now to break bread, or administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, for which the disciples had assembled, (vs. 7.) This was done by the Primitive Church at least every Sabbath day, and it was in connection with a *love-feast*, as it was called—a social meal, which also Paul needed for his refreshing and journey. ¶ *Eaten—tasted*—having made a meal. ¶ *Talked—having familiarly discoursed a sufficient* (considerable) *time, until the day dawns*. He was waiting for the close of the Sabbath, in order to go on his journey, and he occupied the sacred time in familiar converse and discourse; and so—thus—he departed. He started on

his journey, *after this manner*, in such circumstances. There seems a special minuteness in the narrative here, to show us that he did most religiously keep holy time—spending the Sabbath to its close, in sacred duties, and starting on his journey not until the holy day was past. This was not Judaizing.

12. *Brought*. They who had gathered round the young man and witnessed his miraculous restoration, brought him to the assembly alive (from the dead,) and they (the disciples) *were comforted—(strengthened in the faith—from the term “Paraclete,”) not measurably*, that is very much.

13. *We*—i. e. Luke and the other companions of Paul—*went before* (started in advance) *to the ship*. So the rest had gone ahead of Paul and Luke (vs. 5,) to Troas. They seem to have hired the vessel at Philippi for the voyage, (see vs. 16,) though this is not certain. ¶ *Sailed unto Assos*—a sea-port thirty-six miles south—*thence* (from that point) *purposing to take up Paul, for so had he arranged, purposing himself to go afoot*. The journey has been made on foot in five hours. It is not stated why Paul so planned, but it seems intimated that he could rescue some time for his purpose, and yet reach Assos on foot by a good Roman road, as soon as the ship, or at least before it would leave that port. The ship sailed before “day-break” on Monday morning, and had to double a point which was saved by the road. Paul might simply have desired to be alone, thus far.

14. *And as he* (Paul) *joined us at Assos, we took him up according to the plan*, (vs. 13,) *and came to Mitylene—*



15 And we sailed thence, and came the next *day* over against Chios; and the next *day* we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next *day* we came to Miletus.

16 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia; for <sup>p ch. 18:21, and 19:21, and 21:4, 12.</sup> he <sup>q ch. 24:17.</sup> hastened, if it were possible for him, <sup>r ch. 2:1.</sup> to be at Jerusalem <sup>1 Cor. 16:8.</sup> the day of Pentecost.

17 ¶ And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye

thirty miles distant by sea, on the east coast of the Island of Lesbos—say a day's voyage. It was a charming city.

15. Here Luke gives the daily progress and route. ¶ *Over against—opposite to Chios, or Scio*, as it is now called, a beautiful island midway between Lesbos and Samos. ¶ *And the next day we touched at* (a nautical phrase) *Samos*—an island on the Lydian coast in the *Ægean*, about as far from Chios as Chios from Mitylene, fifty or sixty miles. It was famous for the temple of Juno, and as the birth-place of Pythagoras. ¶ *Tarried—for the night*, probably at Trogyllium, a town on the coast opposite to Samos. There was also an island of the same name near this, which some suppose to have been the stopping place. ¶ *Miletus* was a town below this point, and about twenty-eight miles south of Ephesus. It was the ancient capital of Ionia, near the mouth of the Meander, and is now a heap of rubbish. They had reached this place on the fourth day from Troas, on Thursday.

16. *For*. The reason for their passing on to Miletus is given—that Paul had *determined (judged) to sail past Ephesus*, else he would naturally have stopped at Samos, nearly opposite to it. (It would seem from this that they had the vessel, to some extent, under their control.) His plan was not to go to Ephesus, nor to tarry too near the city—literally, *lest it might happen (turn out) to him to spend the time in Asia*—not knowing what detentions he might meet there, so as to *spend the time in Asia* which he needed for Syria. The urgency of friends and

the state of the Church might exhaust the time he had set apart for Syria.

¶ *In Asia*. That Proconsular Asia, of which Ephesus was the capital. It would seem that he planned to communicate with the Church of Ephesus in this way rather than to visit the city itself. ¶ *For he hastened—was hastening—if it were possible—for* already three weeks of the seven between Passover and Pentecost had passed. He was in haste—to carry the alms—to make an exhibit of his ingatherings among the Gentiles—and to keep the feast, or meet the multitudes at Pentecost.

17. His plan, therefore, was to send for the Presbyters, or Elders of the Church, to meet him at Miletus. He wished to address them about their official duties; and in this way he could do so without interruption. The Church of Ephesus was the great centre of all the Churches of Western Asia. (Ch. 19:10.) ¶ *The elders*—literally, *presbyters*—including both classes—the ruling elders, and those who also preached—the ministers. There was doubtless a plurality of the latter as well as of the former, at Ephesus. In vs. 28, he calls them “overseers,” (Gr. “bishops,”) and these terms are used interchangeably in the New Testament, showing that the bishops spoken of were the same as presbyters, pastors, or ministers of a Church. This is admitted now by all scholars, even by the most learned Episcopal writers.

18. Miletus was about twenty-eight miles south of Ephesus, (some make it thirty-six,) and the journey could be accomplished the day after the ~~even-~~

know, \*from the first day that I came into Asia, after <sup>ch. 18: 19 and 19: 1-10.</sup> what manner I have been with you at all seasons,

19 Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me \*by <sup>vs. 3.</sup> the lying in wait of the Jews:

20 And how \*I kept back nothing that was profitable <sup>vs. 27.</sup> unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

21 \*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, <sup>ch. 18: 5.</sup> <sup>Mark 1: 15.</sup> <sup>Luke 24: 45.</sup> <sup>ch. 2: 38.</sup> repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

mons arrived. Probably others from neighboring Churches would also be drawn together, on hearing of his message to the Ephesian Elders. The Apostle has three points in this address. 1. His own relations to this Ephesian Church. (vss. 18-21.) 2. His journey to Jerusalem, and final separation from them. (22-25.) 3. His charge to them in view of the glorious prospects of the Church. (26-35.) ¶ *Ye know.* Thus he appeals to them for his fidelity, with an emphasis—*ye know.* He seems to give here his solemn and public vindication against the calumnies circulated to his injury; and this necessarily brings him to speak prominently of himself. He appeals to those who knew the facts. ¶ *From the first day that I came into Asia how I became* (conducted) *with you all the time.* (See vs. 31.)

19. *Serving the Lord.* This is explanatory of the former—*serving* (as a slave) *the Lord* Jesus. This is what he did—alluding in this term to his entire devotion to his blessed Master. ¶ *Humility of mind.* This is expressed by one word in the Greek; though Jesus called him not servant, but friend, (John 15: 15,) he called himself slave. ¶ *With many tears of anxiety for their salvation* (“going forth weeping.”) See 2 Cor. 2: 4; Phil. 3: 18. See vs. 31. ¶ *And (temptations) trials, which befell me, in the plottings of the Jews.* See vs. 3. Though the Jews had at first desired him to return to them, (ch. 18: 20,) they soon fell into the same hostility with the heathen. See ch. 19: 7, 33.

20. *Kept back.* Amidst all these plots and hostilities he *withheld nothing of the things conducing* (to salvation,)—“pertaining to life and godliness.” ¶ *But showed*—literally, *so as not* (or that I should not) *declare unto you publicly*—in the synagogue of the Jews and the public assembly, (19: 9,) and in houses—private circles—in the Church and in the household. 1 Thess. 2: 11. See 2 Cor. 1: 12.

21. Having reminded them of his manner, he passed to the subject-matter of his preaching. ¶ *Testifying—witnessing* (giving solemn testimony of the truth,) *to the Jews* (first) *and also to the Greeks,* (Gentiles.) This was his habitual practice—entering the synagogues and passing also to the Gentiles with the message of salvation—that was the same message for both, and all classes of them—the *repentance unto God*, which is required in the Gospel—which is the repentance unto life, and not unto death. This comes only from a sense of sin, and of the mercy of God in Christ; thus leading away from sin to God. It is that repentance which is on the Gospel ground of the kingdom of heaven being come. (Mark 1: 15.) ¶ *And faith which is unto* (upon) *our Lord Jesus Christ*—which leads to Christ, embraces Christianity, and rests upon His finished work, as the only hope of salvation. OBSERVE.—These are the two great topics of all Gospel preaching. We shall never have faith without repentance; and after all our repentance we must have faith, because it is Christ's work and not ours which can suffice. We cannot have

ch. 19: 21.

22 And now, behold, \*I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there.

1 ch. 21: 4-11.  
2 Thess. 3: 3.  
3 Or, wait for me.  
4 ch. 21: 13.  
Rom. 8: 35.  
2 Cor. 4: 16.  
e 2 Tim. 4: 7.  
d ch. 1: 17.  
2 Cor. 4: 1.  
e Gal. 1: 1.  
Titus 1: 3.  
f vs. 33.  
Rom. 15: 23.

23 Save that \*the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions || abide me.

24 But <sup>b</sup>none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, \*so that I might finish my course with joy, <sup>d</sup>and the ministry \*which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

25 And now, behold, <sup>f</sup>know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

true repentance until we have a believing view of Christ.

22, 23. *And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit (am going) to Jerusalem*—feeling himself as if led in chains, or bound by cords, he not only went up under strong, resistless impulses, but also “fore-ordained to chains,” feeling that he would be bound in body. The reference is to his own spirit, though the Holy Spirit’s influence is implied. ¶ *Not knowing the things that shall befall me in it, (Jerusalem,) ignorant altogether of the particulars.* ¶ *Save that*—excepting *that the Holy Ghost witnesseth (testifieth) in every city*, (from city to city, as he passed along on his journey.) This testimony was given to him, not only in his strong and special convictions, but also probably by those who were inspired to utter such warnings. See afterwards, chap. 21: 4, 10, 11: see Rom. 15: 31. ¶ *Bonds and tribulations await me (at Jerusalem.)*

24. *But*—lit., *I make account of nothing* (of this kind.) He gloried in tribulations also, see 2 Cor. 12: 10—*neither do I hold my life valuable to myself as (aiming) to finish my course with joy*—that is, though plainly threatened with death at Jerusalem, he did not regard his life as valuable, in comparison with his joyfully completing his career and attaining the goal, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. He alludes to the joy of victors who took the prizes at the public Grecian games. See ch. 13: 25; Heb.

12: 1, 2; 1 Cor. 9: 24-27; Phil. 2: 16; 3: 14. ¶ *And the ministry*—(that is) the ministerial commission, (as an Apostle to the Gentiles,) *which I received of the Lord Jesus*, Rom. 1: 5; Gal. 1: 1, *to testify* (bear witness to and proclaim) *the glad tidings* (Gospel,) *of the grace of God*. In vs. 21 he had said that this was his work. Here he shows his surpassing desire to carry it through to the end; a desire which is not second even to that of life itself.

25. He here plainly declares his assurance of the result, that this leave-taking is final, according to vs. 23. This unqualified declaration weighs against the theory of a second imprisonment and after return to Ephesus. See ch. 19: 21, *Notes*. *Ye all*, (Ephesian Elders, as representing the people,) *among whom I have gone through, (gone thoroughly through,) preaching* (publishing as a herald,) *the kingdom of God*, (Dan. 2: 44,) to be set up for the true Israel, (ch. 1: 3,) proclaiming that it had come, the New Testament dispensation as exhibited in the Church of Christ, as John the Baptist announced and Christ declared, and as to be victorious over all other kingdoms, (Rev. 11: 15,)—*shall see my face no more*. Supposing he had but one imprisonment, and was put to death at the close of the history in this book, then this was the result. Otherwise, they saw him again at Ephesus, (ch. 19: 21,) and he must be regarded here as speaking only his strong convictions in the midst of much uncertainty.

26 Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am <sup>g ch. 18:6.</sup> pure from the blood of all <sup>2 Cor. 7:2.</sup> men.

27 For <sup>A vs. 20.</sup> I have not shunned to declare unto you all <sup>4 Luke 7:30.</sup> the <sup>John 15:15.</sup> counsel of God. <sup>Eph. 1:11.</sup>

28 ¶ <sup>k 1 Tim. 4:16.</sup> Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all <sup>1 Peter 5:2.</sup> the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost <sup>21 Cor. 12:28.</sup> hath made you <sup>m Eph. 1:7-14.</sup> overseers, to feed the church of God, <sup>Col. 1:14.</sup> which he hath pur- <sup>Heb. 9:12.</sup> chased <sup>1 Peter 1:19.</sup> with his own blood. <sup>Rev. 5:9.</sup>

26. *Wherefore I bear witness to you—uttering as his solemn testimony—on this very day, (of my final departure,) that I am clean from the blood of all (men)—not stained by the blood of any, not chargeable with their destruction, having the blood of none upon my skirts, as I have faithfully warned all of their duty and of the coming wrath. See ch. 18:6; Ezek. 3:18-21.*

27. He here gives the ground of this solemn protestation. ¶ *For I have not kept back (withheld, same as in vs. 20,) from declaring—(so as not to declare) unto you the whole counsel of God—the entire plan of salvation by Christ, (see vs. 21,) including that mystery of His will—the Gentiles' reception into the Church, (Ephes. 3:2-11,) though he was so persecuted for preaching it.*

28. In view of his final departure, he solemnly commits to these ministers and officers of the Church the charge of the flock, and exhorts them to all fidelity. ¶ *Unto yourselves.* So he exhorts Timothy, 1 Tim. 4:16, "Take heed unto thyself and unto the doctrine," &c. It was only by looking first to their own responsibility, fidelity and piety, that they could be good guardians of the flock—saving themselves and their hearers. ¶ *The flock.* The Church is the flock of Christ; sheep of His fold. This is the Old Testament figure. Isa. 63:11; Jer. 31:10; Mic. 7:14. And Christ calls Himself "the Good Shepherd," John 10: See 1 Pet. 2:25. He is the Chief Shepherd, 1 Pet. 5:4, and He appoints under-shepherds—the ministers and rulers of His Church. ¶ *Over the which—literally, in which—wherein—as yourselves a part.* ¶ *The Holy Ghost hath made (constituted you.) They were called and qualified by the Holy Ghost,*

(ch. 13:2; 14:23.) Christ in giving the Spirit, gave the Church this office, as he says expressly to them. Ephes. 4:8, 11. Here the Ephesian Presbyters are called *overseers* (bishops) in the flock—committed to their care at Ephesus—themselves also belonging to the flock, and not as superior beings, though set over the flock in their office. These who are here called overseers (or bishops) are the Ephesian Elders or Presbyters, and the terms are used interchangeably here and elsewhere, (see Tit. 1:5-7,) and are never both used together, as they would have been if they referred to distinct officers. There is no trace here of Diocesan Episcopacy, as most Episcopalian critics now admit. (See *Alford Prolegom., Past Epis.* p. 77. *Theodoret* says: "He calls bishops presbyters, for at that time they had both names." So Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, &c. The term rendered *bishops* here, means *inspectors—overseers—called in vs. 17, presbyters.* *Alford* himself remarks: "If our English version had rendered the term here *bishops*, as uniformly elsewhere, it would have been more apparent to every English reader, that elders and bishops were originally and apostolically synonymous." See on vs. 17. So Jerome, Bishop Jewel, Morton of Durham, &c. ¶ *To feed—literally, to shepherd—act the part of a shepherd to.* (John 10:3; 21:16; 1 Pet. 2:25.) It includes guiding, feeding, government and entire charge, such as a shepherd has of his flock, and was addressed to these as rulers of the Church as well as teachers. ¶ *Church of God.* There is very weighty evidence for the text reading "*Church of the Lord*," but though this may have been so altered by some to avoid the inference from

• Matt. 7:15.  
2 Peter 2:1.  
Rev. 2:2, 6.

p 1 Tim. 1:20.  
f John 2:19.

29 For I know this, that after my departing \*shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30 Also, <sup>p</sup>of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

the next clause, (the blood of God,) yet the sense is clear in either case, as the blood of God must be that of God the Son, the God-man, and this agrees with other passages where Christ is spoken of as God. Besides, "Church of God" is the phrase in every other passage but one, "Church of Christ." ¶ *Purchased.* God the Son *obtained by purchase* this Church. He bought it with a price—the whole Church and each member of it, by giving Himself a sacrifice in their stead, suffering their penalty. Hence believers are called his possession—inherittance, Ephes. 1:18; a purchased possession, Ephes. 1:14; Heb. 7:25; 10:39; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Cor. 6:20; a *peculiar* people—literally, a people of purchase, to or for himself, 1 Pet. 2:9; Tit. 2:14. This refers back to Exod. 19:6; the purchase of Israel out of Egyptian bondage, Exod. 15:16. ¶ *With His own blood.* Not that of bulls and calves, Heb. 9:12 to 14:25, nor that of the Paschal Lamb, but *His own*, as set forth by those. The Church which was bought by Christ for Himself at such a cost, is worthy of all care. This is the Church universal as consisting of Jews and Gentiles, "the invisible Church," as that alone which can be said to be "purchased with His own blood." This is the great doctrine of the Church, as set forth by Paul in his Epistle to the Ephesians. Yet it was the Ephesian Church as a visible body to whom he wrote, and not to any "saints" who might happen to be "at Ephesus,"—altogether apart from any visible organization. Rom. 3:23-26.

29. He exhorts these ministers and elders to this strict fidelity toward the blood-bought Church for a special reason, viz. (1) The certain knowledge he had of wicked invaders coming in to desolate them. (2) The perversion of some from their own body. ¶ *Departing*—his present leave-taking or

perhaps his death. ¶ *Wolves.* False teachers, called by our Lord ravening wolves, (Matt. 7:15; John 10:12,) tearing the sheep. This state of things occurred afterwards, as we see from the Revelations, in the message to this Church of Ephesus. John himself labored there as his head-quarters, after Paul's decease; and the Epistles to the seven Churches of Asia, which he was charged to write, give us an insight of a new phase of heresy among the Asiatic Church, as here predicted. Many hold that the Pastoral Epistles (the two to Timothy, and that to Titus,) were written during this state of things, and after Paul's first imprisonment, and after the history in the Acts. All hold that the second Epistle to Timothy was written just before Paul's decease.—The seeds of this Oriental heathenism were already developing among them. Ephesus was the great seat of sorcery, as we have seen, (ch. 19:13, 19.) ¶ *Enter in among you*—shall come into the Church by false profession and come from other places to the city. ¶ *Not sparing*—ravaging and destroying the flock without mercy, by their destructive doctrines, doing the Church the most fatal damage, such as Cerinthus of Alexandria. "Ephesus was the place, above all others, where the Oriental views were, in various ways, combined with the philosophy and mythology of Greece."—*Creuzer*.

30. *Also*—besides this—from *your own selves*—not necessarily from these ministers and elders, but from the Churches they represented. See 2 Tim. 2:17, 18. Some of these false teachers laid claim to the Apostleship, Rev. 2:2-7. Such should *arise*, (spring up,) *speaking perverse things*—teaching perversions of the Gospel doctrine—*so as to draw away* (this would be the aim and result,) *disciples after them*. Such was the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which Christ hated. Rev. 2:6. Christ

31 Therefore watch, and remember, that <sup>†</sup>by the space <sup>‡</sup>ch. 19:10. of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and <sup>†</sup>to the word of his grace, which is able <sup>‡</sup>to build you up, and to give you <sup>†</sup>an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

33 <sup>†</sup>I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

34 Yea, ye yourselves know, <sup>†</sup>that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

had this thing against the Church of Ephesus, that she had left her first love; yet not so as utterly to fall away, though sunk very low, according to this prediction of Paul. How afflictive must have been the knowledge of this to him. Hymeneus and Philetus were of this class of perverts, "whose word," or teaching, "doth eat (he says afterwards to Timothy,) as doth a canker," holding "that the resurrection is past already, and overthrowing the faith of some," as Paul here prophesies. 2 Tim. 3:17, 18.

31. *Therefore*—in prospect of all these dangers and reverses—*watch*—lest the flock, in which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, be desolated and scattered by these wolves. *Be on the look out* for these of whom I foretell you, *and remember that* (as your example,) *by the space of* (during) *three years*—the whole time of this sojourn at Ephesus, or in Asia, (vs. 18; see ch. 19:8, 10,) *night and day*—continually, (see vs. 7, 8, 11,) *I ceased not*—did not pause for any other occupation. We have mention of two years and three months, ch. 19:8, 10, and of a period afterwards, at the riot, including in the nine months the brief journey to Corinth, &c. See Notes, ch. 19:22. ¶ *With tears*, vs. 19, 20. He was no hireling, not caring for the flock, and fleeing when the wolf came, (John 10:13.) See 2 Cor. 2:4; Phil. 3:18. This warning to the elders and people was not in vain. John was charged to write to the angel of this Church, "Thou has tried them which

say they are Apostles and are not, and hast found them liars." Rev. 2:8.

32. *And now*—having thus solemnly charged them. ¶ *I commend you*—intrust you for safe keeping—to God, *as* the only sufficient hope, *and to the word of His grace*—the Gospel of salvation, (Eph. 1:13,) as containing that system of doctrine by which you shall be guided, so as to avoid error. *Which is able*—(that is, God, by His word, in use of that Divinely appointed agency,) *to build you up*, edify you, (Eph. 4:12, 29,) rooted and built up in Him. Eph. 2:20-22; 3:16. ¶ *Inheritance*. Eph. 1:11, 14, 18, as the sons of God, though not Jews, John 1:12, "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs (Eph. 3:6,) and partakers of His promise in Christ by his Gospel," *with* (among) *all them that are sanctified*, Eph. 3:14, 15; 4:13, 16: see ch. 26:18. "Chosen in Him that they should be holy," Eph. 1:4.

33. He now protests that he had labored among them disinterestedly, and of this they were witnesses, while it was his warning to them against the covetousness which swayed Demetrius and the leaders of the idolaters there. (Ch. 19:25.) ¶ *I coveted*—no man's treasure of any kind. *Silver* was in request for "*shrines*" of the goddess. *Apparel* was an item of traffic and wealth among the Orientals, and changes of raiment were often presented to friends. 2 Kings 5:5, 26; 2 Chron. 9:24. The Ephesians were celebrated for their rich clothing.

34. So far from this, he had labored

y Rom. 15:1.  
 1 Cor. 9:12.  
 2 Cor. 11:9-12,  
 and 12:13.  
 Eph. 4:28.  
 1 Thess. 4:11,  
 and 5:14.  
 2 Thess. 3:8.  
 x ch. 7:60, and  
 21:5.

35 I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

36 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

ed at his trade for a living, and that not only for his own support, but that of his companions, Timothy, Luke, Erastus, &c. He could hold out his hands and say, *these hands have ministered—served—made provision*, see ch. 17:10; 18:3. He would not have his companions at their own charges, but would support them himself. He would not take the support he was entitled to from the Churches, lest this might be in the way of his success. So he boasted that he was chargeable to none. In 1 Corinthians, written from Ephesus, he speaks of working with his own hands (1 Cor. 4:11,) at that very time. 1 Cor. 9:4; 6:15, 18; 16:19; see Gen. 14:22, 23; Numb. 16:15; 1 Sam. 12:3; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:8.

35. *All things*—rather, *in all things*—every way I have showed you, that laboring thus, (after my example,) ye ought (literally, ye must,) support the weak, (literally, assist the enfeebled, infirm.) Christian beneficence is a matter not of option, but of obligation, as much a duty commanded by God, as any other. So in 1 Thess. 5:14, he exhorts them to “support the weak,” the same word referring to those in disabled circumstances from sickness or poverty. ¶ *And to remember*. He had showed them also how they ought (it was their sacred duty) to remember the words, &c. These words of our Lord are no where else found, but all His sayings are not recorded, (John 21:25,) and this precious one was doubtless current in the Churches, how He said—rather, that he Himself said, *It is more blessed* (literally, it is a more happy thing, see Matt. 5:3-11,) to give than to receive. The grace of Christian beneficence is thus extolled by our Lord, as full of happiness to the donor,

and more so than the receiving, in which the world make happiness to consist. God has made it a luxury to give. 1st. It is a luxury to have where-withal to give to others. 2d. It is a luxury to help those in distress. 3d. It is a luxury to exercise the temper of Christ and copy His example. 4th. Besides the present reward of Christian beneficence there is a blessedness in future and forever, for such as give on truly Christian principles to support the poor; for it is a charity done to Christ Himself, in his poor members. Matt. 25:45; see Galat. 6:10. This exhortation to the ministers and elders, (the two classes of elders, see 1 Tim. 5:17,) and to the Churches through them, is not to waive the right of being supported by the people, as he had done, but to inculcate the great duty of Christian beneficence in all classes, from his own example, and especially from the testimony of Christ Himself, who “went about doing good.”

36. This tender exhortation he follows up with prayer. *Kneeled down*. This was special; for standing was the posture in public prayer which commonly obtained among the Jews. In Neh. 9:5 the people are commanded to stand in prayer. So at the dedication of the Temple, “and all the congregation of Israel stood,” (1 Kings 8:14,) Jer. 15:1; 18:20; Job 30:20; Mark 11:25. The early Christians (third century) adopted this standing posture, especially on Sabbaths, as expressing not only reverence, but joyous gratitude. ¶ *With them all*. It seems implied by the term that all joined in the prayer, see ch. 21:5, and thus he commended these elders of the Church to God, vs. 32.

37 And they all wept sore, and <sup>a</sup>fell on Paul's neck, and <sup>a</sup>kissed him. a Gen. 45: 14 and 46: 29.

38 Sorrowing most of all for the words <sup>b</sup> which he spake, <sup>b</sup> that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship. b vs. 25.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

1 AND it came to pass, that after we were gotten from them, and had launched, we came with a straight course unto Coos, and the *day* following unto Rhodes, and from thence unto Patara:

37. *They all, &c.*—literally, *there became a great weeping of all, and falling upon the neck of Paul, they kissed him, (repeatedly and earnestly.)* This was the heartiness of their affection for him. ¶ *Sorrowing especially.* It was all the more melting farewell, on account of the words which he had spoken, in vs. 25, that his parting was final. The term rendered "*see*," in vs. 25, means to see with the eyes, but here the term is a stronger one, and means to reverently look upon, contemplate. ¶ *Accompanied*—literally, *sent him forward*, ch. 15: 2; 21: 5—attended, escorted, as an act of affectionate esteem.

#### CHAPTER XXI.

We see the great Apostle now tearing away (vs. 1,) from his Asiatic friends, the Ephesian Elders, and pressing on to accomplish his fond purpose of carrying with him to the Holy City the first fruits of his Gentile converts, and the alms of the Gentiles. Passing by "the isles" of the Gentiles which were to wait for Christ, he arrives at the great Gentile city of Tyre, where he finds "the daughter of Tyre with a gift," (Ps. 45: 12,) and already her merchant ships—"the ships of Tarshish are first to bring the new-born sons from far, their silver and their gold with them," (Isa. 60: 5-13,) in the alms they carried from the Gentile Churches to the poor Jews at Jerusalem, and in the aid they contributed to the service, (vss. 22-25.) But the great battle is now to be fought. He is looked upon with distrust for this very interest in the Gentiles. And hence it is deemed by the Church there advis-

able, that he should show by a public act his abiding interest in the Jews and in their worship, if only performed in the true spirit of faith. While he insisted on his freedom from the ceremonial burdens, where they were carnally imposed, he was also free to observe the law where he pleased, and with the Jews to become a Jew, that he might gain some. But this expedient was the occasion of a Jewish outbreak, and he comes near being put to death by the mob, in the very place where he had taken part with the mob in the stoning of Stephen for preaching the same great truths, in exposition of the Jewish economy, ch. 7.

1. The narrative of the voyage is now resumed, after the interruption of the interview at Miletus. ¶ *Gotten from them.* Rather, *after we were torn away from them*, by a mutually painful and reluctant separation. The vessel seems to have sailed the same day. ¶ *Launched.* This is a nautical term, and means to *set sail* or *get under way*. It refers to setting off from a place, and is rendered in the Gospel by Luke and Acts, "to loose," "to launch," "to sail," "to set forth," "to depart." ¶ *Straight course.* This is also a nautical term, and means to *run before the wind*. ¶ *Coos.* An island twenty-three miles long on the Carian coast, celebrated for its wines, silks, perfumes, &c. They would reach it with the fair wind in about six hours—forty nautical miles south from Miletus. ¶ *Rhodes.* This renowned island was reached *the day following*, (Luke gives us the particulars of the course and



2 And finding a ship sailing over unto Phenicia; we went aboard, and set forth.

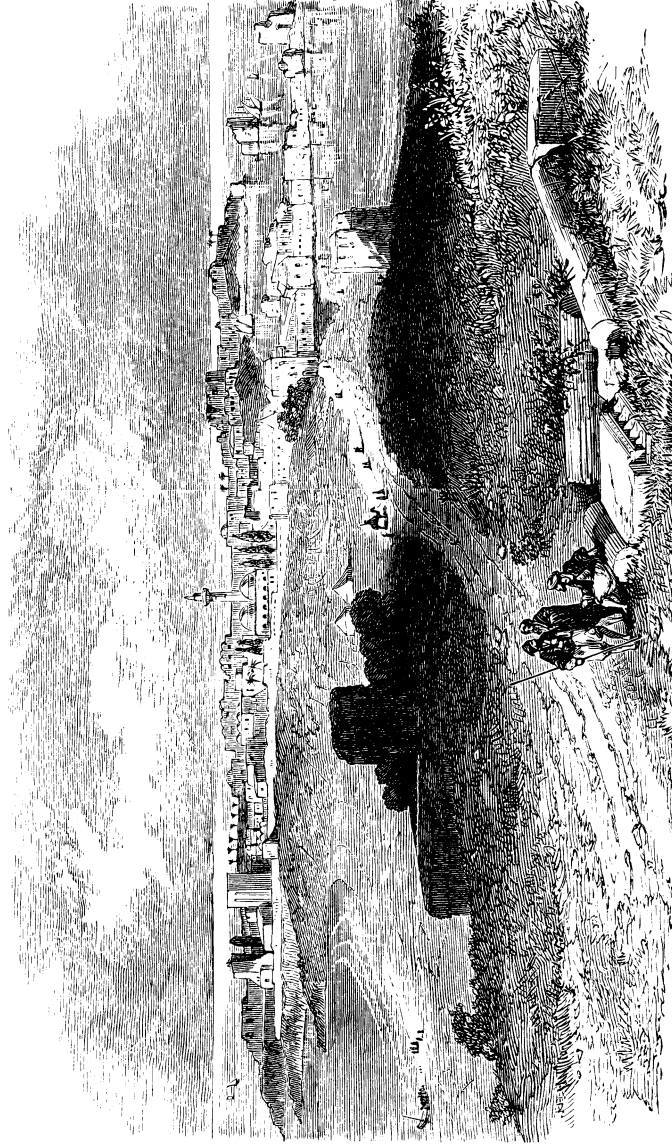
3 Now when we had discovered Cyprus, we left it on the left hand, and sailed into Syria, and landed at Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

the daily distance.) It lies at the entrance of the Ægean Sea, and vessels from Syria up the Ægean to Smyrna and Constantinople commonly touch there. In an Austrian steamer we left Beirut, April 28th, at 5 P. M., and touching at Cyprus 29th, reached Rhodes in the evening of 30th, at 5½ o'clock. We found the island beautiful, bright, verdant (April 30th,)—with fine houses and minarets—some of them shattered by an earthquake. In Paul's times the celebrated Colossus, one hundred and five feet high, in the harbor—a tower in the form of a statue of Apollo—was in ruins from an earthquake. We made the distance from Rhodes to the isle of Patmos, opposite Miletus, in nine hours by steamer. ¶ *Patara*—was a town on the Lycian coast. Apollo gave responses here, as was said, in the winter season, as he did at Delos in the summer. The Spaniards call fictions "*Pataratas*."

2. The narrative of Luke, one of the voyagers, continues to be minute. Here they took another vessel, which they found ready to cross over the Mediterranean from Patara to the Phenician coast. Thus his voyage was forwarded by this Providential opportunity. Probably the other vessel was delayed there, or possibly was to go no further, and they seized this ready conveyance—*went aboard*, (at once,) and *set forth*, the same word as vs. 1, rendered "launched."

3. *Discovered*. This is also a nautical term for the first sight of land. *Having been brought in sight of Cyprus*—the land looming up in sight. Here Paul and Barnabas had done their first foreign missionary work; and he must have caught the view of it now with tenderest emotions. We anchored off it in April, 1851. It is a fertile and salubrious island. ¶ *We left it behind on the left hand side*; that is, sailing under

it so that, having passed it, it would be on the left. This would indicate a fair wind. We found the sea smooth and delightful during all our voyage on the same route at the same season of the year. ¶ *Into Syria—unto Syria*. *Held our course* (steered) *for Syria*. In the ancient division, Syria included Phenicia, of which Tyre was the great commercial port. ¶ *Landed at Tyre*. Another nautical term—*were brought down*. This great city of ancient time, the subject of prophecy, as the proud seat of worldly wealth and mart of commerce, whose history was so connected with that of Solomon's Temple, was now the landing place of Paul in his return from his foreign missionary labors, about May 1st. It was three hundred and forty miles from Patara, and with the fair wind and good sea which prevailed, it might be reached in four or five days. As we saw Tyre from the north, with its white buildings jutting out into the sea, it seemed like a place of some consequence. But on approaching it we found the old wall in ruins, and broken columns of gray and red granite strewed around on the beach, the sea breaking over them. We passed along the main thoroughfare, a narrow lane lined with the poorest kind of shops—the bazaar of that proud city. As I wished to carry away a memento, I asked if any thing was manufactured in Tyre; they replied that there was nothing. No merchant princes any more to be found therein. No mechanics and cunning craftsmen, as in the days of King Hiram and Solomon. One vessel was lying at anchor. Broken columns we saw lying around the lanes, and used for door sills of the low huts. The island is now connected with the main land by the sea-drifts, and the Old Tyre lies buried under forty or fifty feet of sand. We found men excava-



Jacobus' Acta

TYRE

p. 884



4 And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days:

\* who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not <sup>a vs. 12.</sup>  
go up to Jerusalem. <sup>ch. x. 23.</sup>

5 And when we had accomplished those days, we departed and went our way; and they all brought us on our way, with wives and children, till *we were* out of the city: and <sup>b ch. 20:36.</sup> we kneeled down on the shore, and prayed.

6 And when we had taken our leave one of another, we took ship; \* and they returned home again. <sup>c John 1:11.</sup>

7 And when we had finished *our* course from Tyre, we

ting and removing the building material of the ancient ruins, for use in the neighboring towns along the coast. It is even transported to *Beirut*. The view here is taken from Dr Thomson's late work, "The Land and the Book." ¶ *For there*. Providence so ordered that he should land there, for there the ship *was to unlade* (*was unlading*) her burden (*her cargo*). This clause is thrown in significantly. It was one of the commercial ships (called ships of Tarshish,) in which Paul sailed, and her precious freight of converts was more than the cargo of spices, gold and silver. Rev. 18: 12, 13. And the prediction of Isaiah had its incipient fulfillment—"Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God and to the Holy One of Israel, for He hath glorified thee." Isa. 60: 9; Ps. 87: 4. The Syro-Phenician woman was from this vicinity. (Matt. 15: 21; Mark 7: 24.)

4. *Finding*—literally, *having found out the disciples*. Paul had likely preached here soon after his conversion. Gal. 1: 21; ch. 15: 41. The Gospel may have been carried hither by the disciples scattered abroad at the persecution of Stephen, ch. 11: 19. ¶ *Seven days*. This seems to have been the time taken for unlading the ship; thus allowing the returned missionary and his company of converts an opportunity to publish the Gospel more widely in that great city, including a Sabbath. ¶ *Who*—the disciples of Christ at Tyre—*said to Paul, through*

*the Spirit*—that is, having received through the Spirit a forewarning of what awaited Paul at Jerusalem, (as the Holy Ghost testified in every city, vs. 23,) they urged, of their own will, and out of their affection for him, *that he should not go up to Jerusalem*, if he would consult his own safety. Yet Paul went "bound in the spirit to Jerusalem."

5. *And—when it came to pass that we accomplished* (completed) *the days*, (the seven days of delay at Tyre, vs. 4,) *having departed, we journeyed—all forwarding* (escorting) *us* (vs. 20–38,) *with wives and children, unto outside the city*. So deeply interested were they all in the Christian missionaries and in their departure. ¶ *We kneeled*, as 20: 36. Another most affectionate and prayerful farewell, calculated to go to the inmost heart of Paul. [HERE IS EXPRESS MENTION OF CHILDREN IN THE NOTICE OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH. AND HERE AT TYRE IS SEEN THE CHURCH CONSISTING OF CHRISTIAN FAMILIES.]

6. After a solemn leave-taking, which had been tempered by the prayers, on the shore of the great sea, they *took ship*—went aboard. While the returned missionary and these converts were making their persevering way, in the face of all danger and against all the kind entreaties of friends, to Jerusalem, the Tyrian Christians, who seem to have come out *en masse*, returned home—literally, *to their own* (affairs.)

7. *And we* (as the last stage,) *completing the voyage, came down from Tyrs to Ptolemais*, (where the voyage ended,) and the balance of the route was *made*

came to Ptolemais, and saluted the brethren, and abode with them one day.

8 And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Cesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip <sup>a</sup> the evangelist, <sup>e</sup> which was *one* of the seven: and abode with him.

9 And the same man had four daughters, virgins, <sup>f</sup> which did prophesy.

<sup>a</sup> Eph. 4:11.  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. 4:5.  
<sup>e</sup> ch. 6:5, and  
8:26, 40.

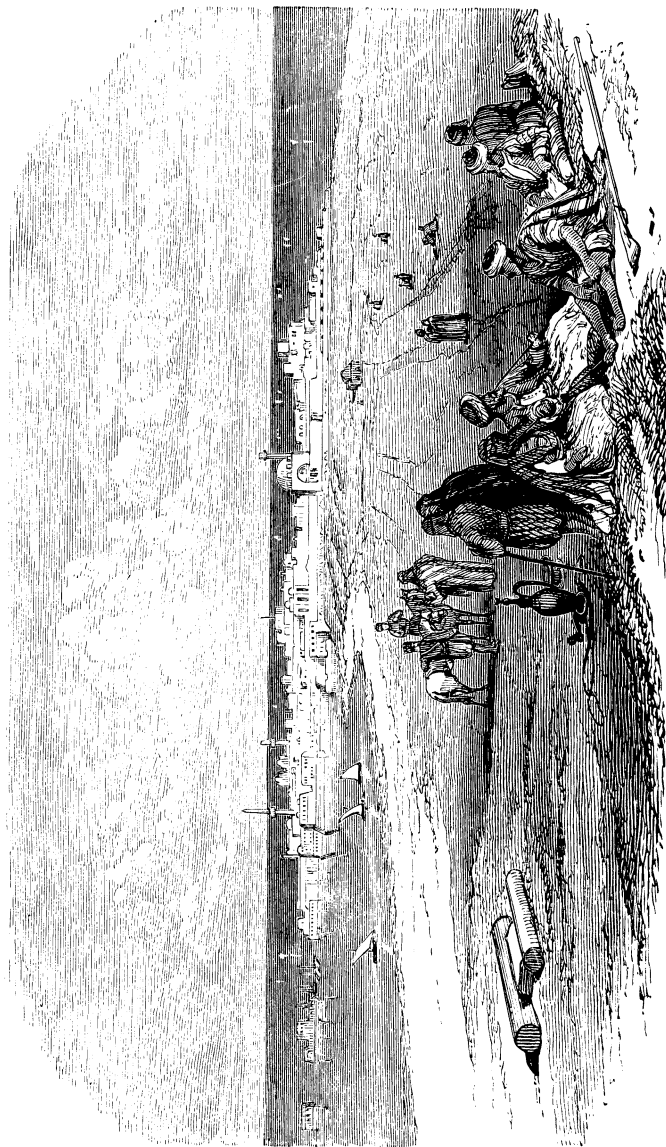
<sup>f</sup> Joel 2:28.  
ch. 2:17.

by land. ¶ *Ptolemais*, the ancient Acco, since called *Acre* and *St. Jean d'Acre* and *Akka*, is about four hours ride north of Mount Carmel, as we traveled on horseback along the sea beach. The town is celebrated for its fortifications, and is said to contain now about ten thousand people. It has a fine harbor, only second to that of Haifa, under Carmel. See Judges 1:34. It would be a short day's passage from Tyre, with a fair wind. They found out the disciples here also, and greeted them as at Tyre, with Christian salutations, remaining there only one day. We visited the Pacha of Acre, and were allowed to pitch our tents among the massive fortifications. He also ordered a centurion, who came in and stood before him with staring eyes waiting the command, which was, to escort us about the walls of the fort and show us the military display of cannon and soldiers. The Pachalic extends to Nazareth, east, and to Jaffa, south. They told us that the population was then six thousand. Paul's company traveled from Ptolemais to Cesarea in one day. Our dragomen declared it to be eleven or twelve hours, and we found the actual travel to be eleven hours.

8. *The next day*—lit., *on the morrow*, while the ship's crew remained at the business of the vessel, *we that were of Paul's company*, (lit., *those about Paul*), departed and came to Cesarea—about forty miles distant by the shore. We set out in March from Ptolemais, on horses, riding along the beach, crossing the river Kishon, which we found much swollen and frightful to wade with our horses, as the sea broke over them and us in a strong wind. Just beyond the Kishon is the modern town and harbor of *Haifa*, at the foot of Carmel. The

mountain rises very abruptly from the sea. Beyond it, on the edge of the Mediterranean, lies Cesarea. At Cesarea there was the family of Cornelius the centurion, (ch. 10:1,) connected with the earliest history of the Gentile conversions, and themselves the first-fruits, (ch. 10:1; 10:44.) ¶ *Philip the Evangelist*. Philip the deacon, one of the seven deacons, (ch. 6:1,) was also an *evangelist*, an office which he held besides that of deacon, especially as the deacon's work at Jerusalem was ended. It was a special commission as a traveling preacher of the Gospel in the early Church, which was given by the Apostles to some who were sent out by them to this work. The office is recognized, Ephes. 4:11, between "Apostles and prophets," and "pastors and teachers." The latter, however, soon came to supersede them, as the regularly constituted ministers of particular Churches. The term means "preacher of the Gospel." See 2 Tim. 4:5. This Philip was the first preacher outside of Jerusalem. He carried the Gospel to Samaria, and the last we saw of him in this work was on the road to Gaza and "in all the cities," terminating his traveling labors at Cesarea, where we find him now, probably as the settled pastor of the Church there, to whose house Paul would naturally go, ch. 8:40.

9. It is here recorded that the blessing promised in Joel had come upon the household of this good minister, in this Roman Gentile city—that his four daughters, who were *virgins*, unmarried, at home with him, *prophesied*, (Joel 3:1.) This was not any public preaching, but simply an inspired praising of God, and foretelling of future events. This incident carries us



Jacobins' Acts.

ACRE (Ptolemais).



10 And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet, named <sup>g ch. 11: 28.</sup> Agabus.

11 And when he was come unto us, he took Paul's girdle and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, <sup>A vs. 33, ch. 20: 23.</sup> So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver *him* into the hands of the Gentiles.

back, very significantly, to all that grew out of the dispersion at Stephen's persecution, (in which Paul was so eminent a party,) and to the far-reaching results in the case of Philip also, who is now to be seen as the Christian pastor in this Gentile city, his household filled with the Holy Ghost. See Judges 4: 4; 2 Kings 22: 14; Luke 2: 26. Possibly the Holy Ghost again in this city witnessed by these prophetesses, of Paul's trials at Jerusalem, as He did by Agabus, vs. 10.

10. It is calculated that Paul arrived at Cesarea on the 10th of May. Up to this point they had been thirty-nine days on the tour. We arrived there on the 13th March. Approaching it from the north, we saw ruins of an aqueduct, with several arches of strong masonry, overrun with shrubs. Along the shore, for a quarter of a mile, were fragments of piers, masses of wall, and fallen abutments, broken columns of white marble and gray granite on the beach, or jutting out from the water—with the remains of Herod's mole, here and there seen above the surface of the waves. Herod seems to have built this city from the ruins of some other, as fragments of granite columns are interspersed with the stone blocks. Dr. Thomson thinks that the tall buttresses, which are now so prominent in the ruins, belonged to a Christian Church probably of the times of the Crusaders. We saw not a solitary being where this city once stood. It is utterly deserted—the mole being overthrown, the harbor is unsafe, and no ship could ride there at anchor. The aqueducts being broken, there is no longer any supply of water. Yet here the kingdom of Christ was opened to the Gentiles—an event in the blessings of

which we share. How unlikely beforehand, that the Church of God, once so confined to the Jews, should ever have passed over to the Gentiles! But this was the plan and prophecy of God. And witness the Church now, the Church of the Gentiles as it was once the Church of the Jews. What prophecy yet on record about Zion can be doubted now? ¶ *Many days*—literally, *more days*, protracting the stay from day to day, about five days, some think ten or eleven. ¶ *Came down*, the term used of coming from Jerusalem. ¶ *Agabus*. He it was who foretold the famine, ch. 11: 27-30, on account of which the Gentile Christians at Antioch had set about collecting alms for the poor Jews at Jerusalem, and had sent it thither by Paul and Barnabas, ch. 11: 30. Strange that the same man now appears to foretell Paul of the trials to come upon him there. Paul is thus reminded of his Gentile work from the beginning, ch. 11: 25.

11. He may have come to Cesarea for the express purpose. He *took Paul's girdle*, or belt, and *bound his own hands and feet*, (not Paul's, but his own,) according to the custom of the ancient prophets to represent symbolically what they predicted. See Isaiah 20: 2; 1 Kings 22: 11; Ezek. 4: 1. ¶ *Thus saith*. He spake by inspiration of the Holy Ghost. *The man whose is this girdle, so shall bind in Jerusalem the Jews*. This was fulfilled, vs. 33, for though he was bound by the Romans, it was at the instance of the Jews, who thus delivered him into the hands of the Gentiles. The Romans held the government of Judea at that time. See ch. 22: 25; 24: 27; 25: 14; 26: 29, and find how abundantly this prophecy of Agabus was fulfilled.



12 And when we heard these things, both we, and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem.

ch. 20:24.

13 Then Paul answered, <sup>1</sup>What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14 And when he would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, <sup>2</sup>The will of the Lord be done.

<sup>1</sup> & Matt. 6:10, and 26:42.  
<sup>2</sup> Luke 11:2, and 22:42.

15 And after those days we took up our carriages, and went up to Jerusalem.

16 There went with us also *certain* of the disciples of Cesarea, and brought with them one Mnason of Cyprus, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

1 ch. 15:4.

17 <sup>1</sup>And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

12. As at Tyre, so here at Cesarea, this revelation led the Christians to entreat Paul not to go to Jerusalem. ¶ *We*. Luke and his companions, Aristarchus and Trophimus. ¶ *And they of that place*—the Christians of Cesarea. Yet, as before, the entreaty had no effect, since Paul was going up by Divine revelation. When his chosen companions sought to move him from his purpose, his heart was deeply agitated.

13. Paul now expostulates with them against such tender entreaties as were calculated to break his heart, while he went up willingly to trial and death for the honor of Christ. ¶ *What mean ye*—literally, *what do ye, weeping and breaking my heart*. The death of His adorable Master at Jerusalem by the same Gentile hands, through the same Jewish persecutions, made the like sufferings sweet—suffering with Him, in prospect of reigning with Him.

14. His firm position and Christian heroism made them acquiesce. ¶ *The will*, &c. This and all the petitions of the Lord's prayer were familiarly used by the Christians, and these words best expressed their Christian resignation. They doubtless were satisfied that Paul acted under Divine direction, and they recognized it as the Lord's will; or gave in their acquiescence to the will of the Lord (Jesus,) whatever it might be.

§ 32. PAUL'S FIFTH VISIT TO JERUSALEM. A. D. 58. Ch. 21:15-17.

15. *After these days*—the “many days” of delay at Cesarea—*we took up our carriages*. This last phrase is the rendering of one Greek word, meaning—*having made ourselves ready*. The English word “carriages,” means *luggage*—things carried, and not vehicles—*having made ready* (i. e. *our luggage*.) See Judges 18:21. ¶ *Went up*. This was the last stage of the eventful journey.

16. They were accompanied to Jerusalem by some disciples—Christian brethren, from Cesarea, who were well acquainted there, and did them this great kindness, that they brought *them to one Mnason of Cyprus, an early (old) disciple, with whom we should lodge*. They were to sojourn at his house at Jerusalem during the Pentecost, when all accommodations would be in so much request. This early disciple may have been one of Paul's first missionary converts at Cyprus, a first fruit of his work of foreign (Gentile) missions; who, now, in God's providence, becomes his host in his most trying circumstances, and a comfort as reminding him of his successful labors, while thus he would be another in the group of Gentile converts whom Paul would present at Jerusalem.

17. *The brethren*—the Christian disciples, members of the Church at Je-

18 And the *day* following Paul went in with us unto James, and all the elders were present.

19 And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20 And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

see ch. 15: 13.  
Gal. 1: 13, and  
2: 9.  
see ch. 15: 4-10.  
Rom. 15: 18, 19.  
see ch. 1: 17, and  
20: 24.

see ch. 22: 3.  
Rom. 10: 2.  
Gal. 1: 14.

rusalem, such as Mnason, who had probably heard of his coming and had assembled to greet him. They had seen Paul there on several previous visits, with alms, &c., and now that he took thither these specimens of his Gentile converts, they received them all *gladly*, and without any appearance of coolness on account of his interest in the Gentiles. Nothing is as yet said of the Apostles. It was not until the next day that an interview was had with the Church authorities.

§ 23. MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY,  
THE APOSTLE JAMES BEING THE MOD-  
ERATOR.

18. Here we find a more formal meeting with James the Apostle and *all the elders*, who were convened, as it would seem, for the purpose, as the Presbytery of Jerusalem. Paul had the alms to present from the Gentile Churches, through their representatives, and he had also to present these companions of his journey as the specimens of his Gentile converts. *James*, the Apostle, the son of Alphaeus, and author of "the Epistle of James," was he who was prominent in the Synod at Jerusalem, A. D. 50, where the great Gentile question was debated and authoritatively settled. (Ch. 15: 13.) He was "the Apostle of the Transition," and, therefore, as one ably representing the middle ground, he was a fit leader and moderator of the Presbytery at Jerusalem. His position at the Synod was that which prevailed. See ch. 15: 13, notes; ch. 12: 17; 15: 13; Gal. 1: 9; 2: 12, 19. ¶ *The elders*—presbyters—the ministers and ruling elders of the Church. No oth-

er Apostle than James seems now to have been at Jerusalem.

19. *Saluted—greeted*, vs. 6, 7; see 18: 22. *He declared particularly*—literally, *he gave an exegesis severally of the things which*, &c. This most particular and detailed account carried him over all his ministry among the Gentiles, at least since he had reported himself four years before. Of course he narrated the striking histories of his revisiting tour among the Churches of Galatia, and Phrygia, and Achaia, and above all at Ephesus.

20. Witness the effect of this report from the returned missionary—a missionary of the first Gentile Church at Antioch, reporting himself to the Old Mother Church at Jerusalem. How could they do less than glorify the Lord, uniting in solemn thanksgivings and praises. And here comes the difficult point. ¶ *Thou seest, brother*. They knew he was aware of the difficulty from the strong Jewish element in the Church, that was naturally suspicious of Paul's Gentile labors, and especially as this suspicion was fanned to a flame by false rumors. It was the old trouble which led to the Synod at Jerusalem eight or nine years before, and which had yet further to be met. *How many thousands*—literally, *myriads*—a general phrase, (meaning *what multitudes*.) There were present the ministers and elders of Churches of the city and immediate vicinity, vs. 18, though this expression refers to the general facts which Paul well knew. These "believing" Jews were probably not all of them true Christians, any more than Simon Magus, but they had espoused the Christian cause,

21 And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise *their* children, neither to walk after the customs.

22 What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23 Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them.

and enrolled themselves with the visible Church. ¶ *Zealous*—literally, *zealots of the law they are*. This verb rendered "*are*," is often used in reference to a fact either unknown to the person addressed, or blameworthy. As it was the time of the festival, the Christians of Judea would have come up already in great numbers. Eusebius quotes from Hegesippus to the same effect, although Origen says that probably the whole number of believing Jews had at no time reached 144,000. We have here a glimpse of the great progress which the Gospel was making among Jews and Gentiles.

21. *Informed*—literally, *catechized*—systematically taught concerning thee. These multitudes of Jews in the Christian Church there, who were thus stickling for the legal observances, were misinformed of Paul's position, as they had misunderstood Stephen's on the same point, (ch. 7:57.) Strange that Paul finds himself now charged with the same heresy which brought Stephen to his martyr death on that very soil, and where he himself took part in the fanatical outrage.—These Jewish disciples had heard these exaggerated statements about Paul, and had, perhaps, seen or heard what he had written in some of his Epistles, disparaging and discarding the ceremonial observances as a ground of trust, and they had inferred unfairly, that he advised the Hellenistic Christians—those Jewish believers which are (scattered) among the Gentiles—to forsake the Mosaic law altogether. ¶ *To forsake*—literally, *dost teach apostasy*. But see 1 Cor. 7:18, 19. He had only insisted that the Mosaic observances were insufficient of themselves for sal-

vation, and were only the shadow of better things in Christ—not denouncing them, except as standing instead of Christ. Yet the tendency of his teachings would be to crowd out circumcision as useless. The Apostolic Synod had decided the question from the Gentile point of view, that the Gentiles needed not to be circumcised. But neither Paul nor the Synod had taught that the Jews ought not to circumcise their children, only that it was not requisite, and ought not to be trusted in for salvation. See Gal. 6:15. He had circumcised Timothy to conciliate, but would not circumcise Titus, lest in this case of a Greek, he might concede too much to the Judaizers. ¶ *Customs*—usages, ordinances, observances of the ceremonial law.

22. *What is it, therefore, that should be done?* *It is altogether necessary that a multitude come together, for they will hear that thou hast come.* It is not a meeting of the Church that is here spoken of as expedient, but a public gathering as inevitable, for the reason stated, (not that they would be convened,) but that they would hear in some way of his being in the city, and would assemble to agitate the subject. It is not *the multitude*, (in the Greek) but *a multitude* of the Jewish Christians.

23. Their advice is here given, and probably upon much previous deliberations. *This, therefore, do which we say to thee.* As before, at the Synod, James and the Elders act in concert, and give their united counsel. ¶ *We have four men.* These were probably Jewish Christians who had taken the vow of a Nazarite, which was a vow of special devotion among the Jews,

24 Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may <sup>¶ Num. 6:2, 1\*</sup> shave *their* heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed <sup>ch. 18:18.</sup> concerning thee, are nothing; but *that* thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

25 As touching the Gentiles which believe, <sup>¶ ch. 15:20-29.</sup> we have written *and* concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from *things* offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

26 Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them <sup>¶ ch. 24:18.</sup> entered into the temple, <sup>¶ Num. 6:18.</sup> to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

Numb. 6:1-21, and called for a variety of sacrifices, besides free-will offerings. Paul himself had taken this vow, as we have seen, ch. 18:18, but not with these temple observances. Now, as the sacrifices and offerings prescribed at the temple were costly, the practice was for the wealthier to aid the poorer in the expenses. This was recommended by the Church authorities to Paul, to *be at charges with them*—(lit., *spend upon them*,) and *purify himself with them*—go through the same forms of ceremonial purification, (not to take the vow) that thereby he might publicly exhibit his respect for the law's observances, if properly, evangelically understood. ¶ *That they may shave their heads*—which was the act that signified the termination of the vow, and the fulfillment of all its requirements. One so assisting made common cause, and became, so far, party to the vow. Thus the proper relation of the law to the Gospel, and of Gentiles to Jews as one in Christ, might be made plain to all, see vs. 26. ¶ *Walkest orderly*—a military term—*walkest by rule*—keeping the law's requirements. Paul did cheerfully observe the law where his countrymen could be thereby conciliated, though he knew and insisted that it could not give life. It was of use as pointing to Christ, and only when rested in without leading to Christ, was it to be denounced.

25. The Presbytery now repeat the action of the Synod on this great subject, *as touching the Gentiles*, insisting

on their freedom from the law as a system of justification, (against the Judaizers,) so that this counsel of the Presbytery should not be understood as Judaizing. On the contrary, as touching the Jews, they would insist that any one was free to go through certain observances of the law, only so as that Christ was held to be the end of the law for righteousness, to the believer. Ch. 15:21. The Jewish Christians, and the Gentile Christians, therefore, ought to be one. ¶ *Written*—lit., *sent* (epistles, decrees,) and *concluded*—*judged*—the same term used by James in the Synod when he said *I judge* (*my sentence*, judgment, *is*,) —the Synod having “judged” as he did, by their vote. ¶ *That they do no such thing*—that they are bound to perform no such ceremonial rites, &c. See ch. 15:19.

26. Paul felt entirely free to do as was counseled by the Presbytery. He went through the ceremonial purifications with these men, without going through the thirty days observances of the vow —*to signify*—*declaring* (to the priests) *the completion* (filling up) *of the days until*—that is, notifying the priests of the duration of the days of purification in which he was to make common cause with the Nazarites—how many days there were until they should offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. This was done that the priests might be informed of the obligations entered into, and prepare for the closing sacrifices accordingly.

u ch. 24:18.

27 And when the seven days were almost ended, \* the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and \* laid hands on him.

u ch. 26:21.

28 Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, \* that teacheth all *men* everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

u ch. 20:4.

29 (For they had seen before with him in the city \* Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

u ch. 26:21.

30 And \* all the city was moved, and the people ran

27. *The seven days.* From the connection we infer that these were the days which should fill up the purification in which the Apostles were to join them and which were to be followed by the closing offerings. See John 11:55. Accordingly, in ch. 24:18, he says, "they found me purified in the temple." ¶ *The Jews from Asia*, of which Ephesus was the capital. The Ephesian Jews were among his bitterest enemies, ch. 20:19. They were amazed to see him in the temple, as they held him to be an apostate and a profaner of the temple. They were such as had rejected his teachings in the Asiatic cities, and could think no good thing of him now, amidst the excitement of the great Jewish festival of Pentecost. He had sought to conciliate the Jewish Christians, and may have succeeded, but these bigoted and bitter unbelieving Jews were enraged, and *stirred up all the crowd*, who were assembled in the city from all quarters. ¶ *Laid hold—arrested.*

28. They made a loud appeal to the Jews, as such—*Men of Israel—Men, Israelites, help*—to bring this offender to punishment. ¶ *This is the man*, the notorious one; *who*, as we can witness, *teacheth all, every where, against the people*, (accusing the Jewish people as the murderers of the Messiah,) *and the law*—the Mosaic law—the Mosaic economy, as insufficient and ready to vanish away, vs. 21, *and this place*—the temple—as not exclusively the residence of God on earth. They understood Paul's doctrine as they understood Stephen's, to be blasphemy

against Moses and the temple. Paul must have remarked how similar was the accusation against Stephen, when he himself was probably one of the accusers. (Ch. 7:58.) ¶ *And further.* This was a second charge; that he had also *brought Greeks* (Gentiles) *into the temple*, (the second court, or court of the Israelites, which was beyond the court of the Gentiles, and which had on the marble columns this inscription, in Greek and Latin: "Let no foreigner go further, on penalty of death.") ¶ *And hath polluted* (*profaned*) by so doing, *this holy place*—set apart to sacred use. The outer court of the Gentiles was open to them, but beyond that they could not go. See Paul's defense, ch. 24:17.

29. They had seen one Greek with him in the city—a convert of his from Ephesus, whom these Jews from Ephesus knew as such—and now they leap to the conclusion that he also had taken that Gentile (and others) into the sacred court where none but an Israelite could enter. ¶ *They had seen before*—on some former occasion, perhaps on that very day, and near the temple, with him, in the city, *Trophimus*, (see ch. 20:4,) *an Ephesian*—a Gentile of that city, and not a Jew.

30. This outcry, with such fanatical charges, raised the greatest excitement throughout the city, among the throngs of bigoted Jews who had come up to the Pentecost. They *drew him out of the temple*—as they meant to kill him, and would not defile the temple with his blood. Then, immediately, *the doors were shut* by the Levites. The doors

together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

31 And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

32 <sup>b</sup> Who immediately took soldiers and centurions, and <sup>c</sup> ran down unto them: and when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, they left beating of Paul. <sup>ch. 23: 27, and 24: 7.</sup>

33 Then the chief captain came near, and took him, and <sup>d</sup> commanded *him* to be bound with two chains; and de- <sup>e</sup> <sup>vs. 11.</sup> <sup>ch. 20: 23.</sup> demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34 And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude: and when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was, that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the people.

which separated the court of the Israelites from that of the Gentiles, lest the Gentiles, in revenge, might make an interruption into the sacred place; or perhaps to shut out any rioting that might ensue. We hear nothing of the Christian Jews making any interference. The Church was doubtless praying for him, and this will account for his deliverance.

31. *And they seeking to kill him,* (by beating him, vs. 32,) that is, the Jews of Asia, (vs. 27,) joined by the mob, (vs. 30.)—*an (official) report went up to the chief captain of the band*—the chiliarch of the band, (or leader of a thousand.) A Roman garrison was stationed *in the precincts* of the temple during the great festivals, to keep order and suppress any riot. This chief captain and guard occupied the tower of Antonia, built on a steep rock on the north west of the temple area, connecting with the court by a flight of steps. This officer was Claudius Lysias, and the report went up to him without any delay. The temple area is now occupied by the Turkish Mosque of Omar, and this fortress is the site of the present Turkish garrison, from which we could get the best view of the inclosure.

32. The chief captain immediately started with his troops—*soldiers and centurions*, more than one, with their ample complement of men—and this

had the effect to make them cease the beating, which must shortly have resulted in his death. So it occurs, strangely enough, that the Roman (Gentile) power comes to the rescue of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, against the mad hostility of the chosen people.

33. The mob had desisted at the appearance of the military corps, and the chief captain coming near, arrested him, upon the presumption of his being an offender. His object was to put him in custody until the facts should be ascertained. He ordered him to be bound with two chains—fastened by each arm to a soldier—as was the custom—as with Peter, ch. 12: 6. *And demanded*—made formal inquiry—who he might be, and what he has done. The prophecy of Agabus was here fulfilled, ch. 21: 11. Lysias seems to have thought him a dangerous agitator, who had recently appeared and been condemned—that Egyptian, vs. 38.

34. What a graphic description of the mob, in the wildness of their fanaticism; all anxious to accuse him, and yet defeating their own end by the noisy furor—each drowning his neighbor's outcry, so that *he could not know the certainty for the tumult*. Therefore, *he commanded him to be led into the castle*, or tower of Antonia, where the garrison were posted.

35. *The stairs*—which are also men-

36 For the multitude of the people followed after crying, <sup>d</sup> Away with him.

<sup>d</sup> Luke 23: 18.  
John 19: 15.  
ch. 22: 22.

37 And as Paul was to be led into the castle, he said unto the chief captain, May I speak unto thee? Who said, Canst thou speak Greek?

<sup>e</sup> See ch. 5: 36.

38 <sup>e</sup> Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers?

<sup>f</sup> ch. 9: 21, and  
xx: 3.

39 But Paul said, <sup>f</sup> I am a man *which am* a Jew of Tarsus, *a city in Cilicia*, a citizen of no mean city; and I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 12: 17.

40 And when he had given him license, Paul stood on the stairs, and <sup>g</sup> beckoned with the hand unto the people.

And when there was made a great silence, he spake unto *them* in the Hebrew tongue, saying,

tioned by Josephus, as leading up from the court of the temple to the tower of Antonia. ¶ *So it was*—literally, *it happened that he was borne*—carried—by the soldiers, (not “by means of,”) but *on account of* the pressure of the crowd. He was rather *lifted* by the soldiers than led, as the mob crowded so upon them. This is the vivid description of Luke, who was an eye witness deeply interested in the scene.

36. *For.* The reason is here more distinctly stated. *The multitude of the (Jewish) people were following crying, Away with him.* How striking that this was also the cry of the Jewish populace urging the crucifixion of our Lord, which Paul very probably may have heard, or even joined in, some thirty years before. Luke 23: 18; John 19: 15.

37. Paul now having reached the platform, asks permission of the chief-captain to speak. Though bruised and bound, he would yet give his testimony for Christ in the hearing of his mad and deluded countrymen. *Is it permitted me to speak unto thee—and he said, Dost thou know in Greek?* Are you acquainted with Greek, so as to understand and speak it? The Roman officer was surprised to hear him talk to him in Greek.

38. *Art not thou.* Rather, *Thou art not then* (as I had supposed,) *that Egyptian, &c.* Such a seditionist had appeared

not long before, threatening to overthrow the Roman government. He is mentioned by Josephus as having collected at length as many as thirty thousand to his standard, (though elsewhere four hundred only are named as from the desert;) he leads them to the Mount of Olives, where he promised them that they should see the walls demolished by a miracle. ¶ *Uproar*—rather, *was stirring up sedition and leading out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the assassins* (called *sicarii*, because they wore a short sword or dagger in their girdle, called *sica*.) The different numbers as given by Josephus and Luke, represent the adherents of this man at different stages of his progress. They were routed and scattered by Felix.

39. Paul calmly explained who he was, and how he would naturally speak Greek—as being not an Egyptian, but *a Jew of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city of Cilicia.* Josephus calls Tarsus the metropolis of Cilicia, most renowned for its university. ¶ *Suffer me to speak* (discourse) *unto the people, who though infuriated, were still his kinsmen according to the flesh.* Rom. 9: 3.

40. This is indeed a sublime spectacle. The great preacher of salvation yearning for the souls of his countrymen, yet hotly pursued by them as they thirsted for his blood. Yet while he is bound and bruised by their beat-

## CHAPTER XXII.

1 MEN, <sup>a</sup> brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence <sup>a ch. 7:2</sup>  
*which I make now unto you.*

2 (And when they heard that he spake in the Hebrew tongue to them, they kept the more silence; and he saith,)

ing, he turns upon them now under the protection of Gentile arms, (their haughty conquerors,) and offers a tender vindication of himself, and of his cause—his first and last speech to the people of Israel in Jerusalem. Must he not now have remembered Stephen and his noble vindication on this very sacred spot more vividly than he remembered it at Athens, on Mars' Hill? The particulars are here graphically given. *He spake unto them in the Hebrew tongue*, (dialect) as better suited to show his own Jewish character, and to enlist their most sacred attention. So long as he has life or strength he is eager to plead with his poor deluded countrymen, if yet by any means they might receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER XXII.

§ 34. PAUL'S FIRST DEFENSE, VIZ. BEFORE THE JEWISH MULTITUDE.—  
*Jerusalem. A. D. 59. Ch. 22:1.*

We enter now upon a series of pleas made by Paul in self-defense. This defense is the first of five which are recorded in successive chapters 22–26, as made in different circumstances leading to the close of the history. This may be considered as Paul's first formal vindication of himself before his own people.

1. *Men, brethren and fathers.* The same opening as Stephen used, (ch. 7:2.) *Men*, (who are) *brethren* (fellow Israelites) *and fathers*, such as the doctors and rulers of the Sanhedrim, who may have been present. He thus at the beginning, like Stephen, puts forward his lineal relation to them in a way to conciliate, and to show how his heart yearned for his kinsmen according to the flesh. ¶ *My defense.* He bespeaks a hearing (according to the

usual form of address) for the *defense*—(literally, *apology*) which he would now proceed to make to them. The ancient sense of the word *apology* did not imply any acknowledgment of wrong or mistake, but signified merely a vindication or defense.

2. *Spake*—rather, *was addressing them.* ¶ *The Hebrew tongue—dialect.* He had just before addressed the chief officer in Greek, and he would have been understood in that tongue. But he preferred to use the Hebrew to show himself a Jew, as he wished to repel the charge of apostasy from the religion of their fathers. He goes on, therefore, to show his Jewish descent and education, and zeal for the law, even to persecuting the Christians; his miraculous conversion, in which Jesus of Nazareth reveals Himself to him with a threefold Divine testimony. OBSERVE.—(1) The Lord appearing unto him from heaven, (vss. 6–10.) (2) The revelation to Ananias, a Jew, concerning him from on high, (vss. 11–16.) (3) The repetition of the appearing and command of the Lord at Jerusalem, (vss. 17–21,) all which Divine testimonies were fully sufficient, by their own law, to confirm the facts. Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16. He further shows that Ananias, through whom this change in him was established, was himself a devout Jew, (vs. 12,) and had wrought a miracle upon his blindness, (vs. 13,) and had also testified that Saul's conversion was by the God of their fathers, (vs. 14.) And further, that it was through this Jewish channel, and from this Divine source that he received the commission to the Gentiles, vss. 14, 15. *The Hebrew dialect*, used by the Apostle, was probably the vernacular speech of Judea, the Aramaic, and not the pure Hebrew, which would scarcely have been un-



b ch. 21:39.  
 2 Cor. 11:22.  
 Phil. 3:5.  
 c Deut. 33:9.  
 2 Kings 4:38.  
 Luke 10:39.  
 d ch. 5:34.  
 e ch. 26:5.  
 f ch. 21:20.  
 Gal. 1:14.  
 g Rom. 10:2.  
 h ch. 5:3, and  
 26:9, 10, 11.  
 Phil. 3:6.  
 i Thm. 1:13.  
 k Luke 22:66.  
 ch. 4:5.  
 l ch. 9:2, and  
 26:10-12.

3 <sup>b</sup> I am verily a man *which am* a Jew, born in **Tarsus**, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city <sup>c</sup> at the feet of <sup>d</sup> Gamaliel, and taught <sup>e</sup> according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and <sup>f</sup> was zealous toward God, <sup>g</sup> as ye all are this day.

4 <sup>h</sup> And I persecuted this way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5 As also the high priest doth bear me witness, and <sup>i</sup> all the estate of the elders: <sup>k</sup> from whom also I received letters unto the brethren, and went to Damascus, to bring them which were there bound unto Jerusalem, for to be punished.

derstood by the mixed assembly, native and foreign, though it was the sacred and learned tongue of the Jews. ¶ *They afforded more silence*, (silent attention,) on this account. The effect was as he intended. Their Jewish interest was excited in the speaker, and they were irresistibly drawn into sympathy with one who, by his use of their own language, showed that he was one of them.

3. As to his birth and education, he shows himself a thorough Jew, though of foreign birth. "*I am indeed a Jew, born in Tarsus, but,*" &c. The emphasis is upon the *I*, and the antithesis is between his foreign birth in Tarsus, and his rearing at Jerusalem, and it might read, "born indeed, at Tarsus, but," &c. Though he was born outside the Holy Land and a Hellenist, yet he was reared from boyhood at the Holy City, and could not be accused of imbibing foreign prejudices with his birth. 2 Cor. 11:22; Phil. 3:5. ¶ *In Tarsus of Cilicia*, a city of the province of Cilicia. ¶ *Brought up—nurtured—reared, at the feet of Gamaliel*, from about twelve years of age. The teachers were stationed commonly upon a platform, so that the pupils who stood, were said to be at their feet. Luke 10:39; Deut. 33:3. This is without doubt the Gamaliel already spoken of, ch. 5:34, whose moderate counsels prevailed at a critical moment. ¶ *Taught—educated—trained, as a pupil*. See ch. 26:4, 5. ¶ *According to the (accuracy) strictness of the paternal law*—"according to the exact form of the law of our fathers,"—

*Beza*. Ch. 24:18. He was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews," (Phil. 3:5,) "as touching the law, a Pharisee." (ch. 26:5.) ¶ *Zealous—a zealot of God*. See Gal. 1:14; Phil. 3:6. He had acted as they were then doing. He had joined in denouncing Stephen as an Apostle, and had regarded his views as a profanation of Moses and the temple; and had even conspired with the multitude for his death. "I had the same zeal for God which ye all show this day."

4. He mentions his former savage hostility to these Gospel views, though it was now the deepest grief and shame to him. 1 Cor. 15:7-10. The argument was a pointed and powerful one. "I once thought and acted on this subject just as you are now doing, and should have continued to do so but for for what so miraculously occurred," vs. 6, &c. ¶ *I persecuted this way*—this party—those of this way of religion and worship, and that not moderately, but to the very extreme, unto death, (as in the case of Stephen, ch. 6:1,) *binding with chains and delivering into prisons both men and women*. It was an awful excess which is elsewhere referred to, that he treated thus not only men, but also women. OBSERVE.—Paul may have seen in his own marvelous conversion a gleam of hope for his Jewish brethren and nation, that they also *might be converted*.

5. For the truth of these important facts in his case, he now appeals to the then high priest and chief court, the Sanhedrim. ¶ *Doth bear me witness*—literally, *witnesseth*—is my witness, I

6 And 'it came to pass, that, as I made my journey, <sup>1 ch. 9:3, and 26:12, 13</sup> and was come nigh unto Damascus about noon, suddenly there shone from heaven a great light round about me.

7 And I fell unto the ground, and heard a voice saying unto me, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8 And I answered, Who art thou, Lord? And he said unto me, I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9 And <sup>m</sup>they that were with me saw indeed the light, <sup>m Dan. 10:7. ch. 9:7.</sup> and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me.

confidently appeal to him for the facts. See ch. 9:2. It was probably Theophilus, son of Ananias, who was appointed by Vitellius, the Roman governor, on the year of Paul's conversion—possibly it was his brother Jonathan, who was removed that year. He may have been in the crowd while Paul was speaking, and possibly was recognized by him. ¶ *And all the estate, &c.*—literally, *and all the presbytery*—that is, the Sanhedrim, consisting of elders, &c. ¶ *From whom*—from this highest court of the nation, and by the authority of the high priest himself. They gave him letters—a commission, *unto the brethren*—the Jews of Damascus, whom he here calls “brethren,” or to his brother officers, the rulers of the synagogues there. This was at his request. Ch. 9:2. ¶ *And went—I was on my way*, (for the purpose of) *bringing also those who were there* (as well as those in other places,) *bound* (in chains,) *unto Jerusalem, that they might be punished*, by imprisonment, stripes or death. Ch. 8:1, 3; 26:11.

6. There are three accounts of Paul's conversion—one by Luke, ch. 9, and besides the one before us, that in ch. 26. (*Compare.*) These separate accounts show only such minor variations as would naturally occur when only the substantial facts are narrated. ¶ *It came to pass*—literally, *it occurred to me journeying*—it took place as I journeyed, and approached Damascus. He here mentions that it was *about noon*, (omitted ch. 9:3,) to show the ineffable glory that was so manifest at noon day (vs. 11.)—“a light above the brightness

of the sun,” (ch. 26:13.) See *Notes*, ch. 9:3.

7. *The ground*—the pavement—perhaps a paved road leading into Damascus, or on the traveled solid road near the city. The spot where tradition has located the miracle was pointed out to us, but there is no proof of the locality. ¶ *Heard, &c.* See ch. 9:4, *Notes*.

8. See *Notes*, ch. 9:5. ¶ *Jesus of Nazareth—the Nazarene*. In Luke's account it is, “I am Jesus.” Paul gives this name more fully, for it is his object here to show that it was none other than the crucified Nazarene who thus appeared to him, and who thus proved His Divinity and the truth of *His Resurrection and Mission*.

9. *They that were with me*—his attendants, companions and helpers on this errand of persecution. These *saw, indeed, the light*—but as in ch. 9:7, they “saw no man.” So in ch. 9:7 it is said, “they heard a voice,” yet “they heard not the voice of Him that spake,” that is, while they heard the sound of the voice, they heard nothing intelligible, and did not hear what was said by the Lord. The revelation was intended for Saul himself. See vs. 14. There is not the slightest contradiction here. We all say that a man's speech is not heard, if he does not make himself distinctly audible; and by this we mean precisely what is here said, that we hear a voice, but do not hear the voice so as to recognize and understand the speaker. So we often hear a voice in an adjoining room, or behind us on the street, but do not hear it definitely,

10 And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.

11 And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus.

n ch. 9: 17.

o ch. 10: 22.  
p 1 Tim. 3: 7.

12 And <sup>n</sup>one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, <sup>o</sup>having a good report of all the <sup>p</sup>Jews which dwelt there,

13 Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him.

do not hear *the* voice of him that speaks, as to who it is, or what he says. These attendants saw enough to satisfy them of the miraculous appearing, but were not allowed to see the Person or hear His words.

10. Paul omits the tender words of Christ, which applied only to his personal case as a persecutor, "It is hard for thee," &c. but passes on to show that such a Divine miraculous revelation led him to submission and acknowledgment of the Risen Lord, and of His claims to His service. *What shall I do, Lord?* In ch. 9: 6 it is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" ¶ *Arise*, &c. In almost the same terms as given in ch. 9: 6, he was directed to go into the city of Damascus, near which he had come, and there he should receive fuller directions what to do—*of all things which are* (divinely) *appointed to thee to do*. These things he should hear from Ananias, vss. 14, 15, 16, and perhaps from the Lord Himself. Ch. 26: 16–18.

11. *Could not see*—literally, *did not see*. He here states that he was blinded by the glory of that light, vs. 6, "above the brightness of the sun," (26: 13,) a sign of "the glory that excelleth," 2 Cor. 3: 10. Luke states that "when his eyes were opened he saw no man," that is, the dazzling light made him close his eyes, and when he opened them again he saw no one. Luke also states that he was three days in this blindness. See ch. 9: 8 and notes. And we infer that it was not the mere natural effect of the dazzling splendor, but a miraculous blinding during this

interval, after which "there fell from his eyes as it had been scales, and he received sight forthwith," &c. ch. 9: 18. So Zacharias was struck dumb for a season for his unbelief. Luke 1: 20. This was also given to Paul probably as a sign of the conversion of the Jews, "that blindness in part (for a season) has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in, and that the vail which is to this day upon the heart when Moses is read, shall be taken away." 2 Cor. 3: 16. See 1 Tim. 1: 13–16.

12. He proceeds now to show that he was led into his changed relations by means of one who was a devout Jew, and in high repute for his strict conformity to the law. He omits the account of Ananias' vision, as given ch. 9: 10–17. His object is to show that it was not only by the clearest Divine call, but also by most approved Jewish agency, that he was led into the Christian Church. Hence he dwells on the standing of Ananias as above all suspicion among the Jews at Damascus. ¶ *Of good report*—literally, *witnessed of*—attested, indorsed. For these facts there was amplest evidence at hand.

13. He shows further that Ananias came Divinely commissioned, and wrought a miracle upon him in proof of this. The narrative of his commission was given by Luke, ch. 9. ¶ *Brother Saul*. This epithet showed that Ananias recognized him as a brother Jew in good standing. ¶ *Receive thy sight*—rather, *look up*—the same word as in the next clause.

14 And he said, "The God of our fathers" hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and "see" that Just One, and "shouldest hear the voice of his mouth."

15 "For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

16 And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, "and wash away thy sins," calling on the name of the Lord.

17 And "it came to pass, that, when I was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance

g ch. 3:12, and  
5:30.  
r ch. 9:15, and  
26:16.  
s 1 Cor. 9:1, and  
15:8.  
t ch. 3:14, and  
7:52.  
u 1 Cor. 11:23.  
Gal. 1:12.  
x ch. 23:11.  
y ch. 4:20, and  
26:16.  
z ch. 2:38.  
Heb. 10:22.  
a ch. 9:14.  
Rom. 10:13.  
b ch. 9:26.  
2 Cor. 12:2.

14. Here he declares that Ananias asserted his Divine authority, and delivered the message with which he was sent from God. Ananias gives the substance of what was revealed to him about Saul's mission. ¶ *The God of our fathers.* "The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—the God of the Jewish nation." ¶ *Chosen thee.* See ch. 9:15. He is a chosen vessel unto me—literally, *hath before appointed thee.* See vs. 10. ¶ *And see that Just One.* This vision of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, which was a mark of Apostleship, 1 Cor. 9:1; 11:23; 15:8; Gal. 1:1, 11, 12. Christ is called the Just One, ch. 3:14; 7:52. "Even Jesus that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest." ¶ *Shouldest hear the voice.* This was reserved for Paul, and not allowed to his attendants. He was to receive the instructions for his future work. And it was at this time, doubtless, that he received from the Lord that which also he delivered unto the Corinthian Church about the institution of the Lord's Supper. 1 Cor. 11:23.

15. *His witness to all men*—(without distinction of race or class,) Rom. 1:14; Col. 1:16–23. "To bear my name before the Gentiles and kings, and the children of Israel," ch. 9:15. He was thus miraculously made a witness of Christ's resurrection, (as to the fact,) and this was one essential requisite in an Apostle; this great fact the Apostles were to testify as the conclusive proof and Divine seal of Christ's work. See ch. 1:8, 22; 10:39; 13:31. ¶ *Seen and heard.* Ch. 9:27; 26:16. All that was revealed to him by Christ,

and what he also saw of Him as the risen Lord, as well as what should soon be further revealed to him, (vs. 18–21,) as regards his special commission to the Gentiles, &c.

16. He here shows that he was formally received into the Christian Church by Ananias, and was baptized. ¶ *Why tarriest thou?*—words of encouragement, showing to him also his immediate duty and privilege; and this was by one who acted under commission from the God of their fathers, and proved that commission to him by a miracle—removing the blindness which had been miraculously visited upon him. ¶ *Arise*—lit., *stand up and be baptized.* This implies that he was baptized *standing up*, and baptized *on the spot.* ¶ *Wash away*—*get thy sins washed away.* This does not refer to the baptism, but to that which the baptizing with water signified—the cleansing from sin, which he was exhorted to get, in the way of *calling upon the name of the Lord* (Jesus)—acknowledging and receiving Him, and waiting upon Him in daily and hearty confession of His name, whom he had before despised and persecuted. *Observe.*—Baptism was not regeneration, but came after regeneration, as a privilege of the renewed man—and in such case the ordinance is spoken of as connected with prayer and sanctification.

17, 18. Now the Apostle ventures to speak of his special commission to the Gentiles—that it was not at Damascus, a foreign city, but at Jerusalem, the Holy City, and while he prayed in

c vs. 14.  
d Matt. 10: 14.

18 And \*saw him saying unto me, \*Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

vs. 4.  
ch. 3: 3  
f Matt. 10: 17

19 And I said, Lord, \*they know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee:

the temple, that such a revelation came to him from God, clearly defining his commission as an Apostle to the Gentiles. This visit was probably his first visit to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion. Gal. 1: 18, 23. All the circumstances agree well with that occasion. He remained but fifteen days, and here he tells us that he left the city by revelation, vs. 18. Paul here shows that his conversion did not cut him off from the religion of his fathers, nor from the worship of the temple; and that therefore he was not, as they charged, an apostate from the Jewish Church. He took no one step but by Divine direction, and as he was in the way of his accustomed worship in the temple. This is more fully related, ch. 9: 26-29. ¶ *Trance—ecstasy.* Some understand this as the same which is referred to, 2 Cor. 12: 9, but without good ground. ¶ *Saw Him*—the same person as before—the Lord Jesus. Paul had meanwhile been three years in Arabia, going in and out of Damascus, and now at length was waylaid by the Jews, who plotted to destroy him. On this account the Christian disciples had let him down in a basket, by the walls, so that he escaped to Jerusalem. There also he met with similar hostility, and was escorted by the brethren to Caesarea, on the way to Tarsus, ch. 9: 29, 30. See Gal. ch. 1. ¶ *Get thee quickly.* Here he informs us that he left Jerusalem by Divine direction. And hence it appears that his commission to the Gentiles is specially given on the basis of his rejection by the Jews, vs. 21. ¶ *They will not receive.* Though he was to bear witness of Christ's name before the children of Israel as well as the Gentiles, (ch. 9: 15,) it was here announced to him that the Jews would not receive his witness, and that hence he must turn to

the Gentiles, ch. 9: 29. He had now to flee lest they should take his life; and though he was not to cease laboring for the Jews, he was to be the Apostle to the Gentiles, and must not tarry in Jerusalem, but go to the ends of the earth.

19. He now shows by his reply that it was his own cherished plan to labor in Jerusalem, that he might prove there the reality of his conversion, and preach the faith which once he destroyed, so that they should glorify God in him, (Gal. 1: 23, 24,) and so that he should undo as far as he could the mischief of his persecuting career. They who were now persecuting him for preaching to the Gentiles ought to see plainly that he did not go to the Gentiles of his own choice, but only after his expressed wish to the contrary was overruled by the Jewish opposition and by the Divine command. Surely these plain facts of the case in his defense ought to have restrained their violence. ¶ *Lord, they know.* The Jews (just spoken of) in Jerusalem. So Ananias had objected to the Divine direction, ch. 9: 13. So also Moses, (Exod. 4: 10,) and Jeremiah, (Jer. 1: 6,) lit.—*They themselves know.* He could not but think that his testimony now as a converted foe would be powerful, and he longed to occupy this field of labor, among those who knew well what a malignant enemy of Christ and the Christians he had been. ¶ *That I was imprisoning and beating,* (skinning, and flogging with the scourge,) *in every synagogue*—lit., *through the synagogues.* Searching thoroughly among the synagogues for the believers—disciples. “I punished them (by scourging) oft in every synagogue,” ch. 26: 11, “being exceedingly mad against them.” ¶ *Them that believed on thee—the Christians.* This narrative here boldly uttered would be also a public

20 \* And when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and <sup>g</sup>consenting unto his death, and kept the raiment of them that slew him.

21 And he said unto me, Depart: <sup>h</sup>for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word, and <sup>i</sup>then lifted up their voices, and said, <sup>j</sup>Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that <sup>k</sup>he should live.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 7: 58.  
<sup>h</sup> Luke 11: 48.  
<sup>i</sup> ch. 8: 1.  
<sup>j</sup> Rom. 1: 32.  
<sup>k</sup> 1 ch. 9: 15, and  
 13: 2, 46, 47, and  
 18: 6, and 26: 17.  
<sup>l</sup> Rom. 1: 5, and  
 11: 13, and 15: 16.  
<sup>m</sup> Gal. 1: 15, 16,  
 and 2: 7, 8.  
<sup>n</sup> Eph. 3: 7, 8.  
<sup>o</sup> 1 Tim. 2: 7.  
<sup>p</sup> 2 Tim. 1: 11.  
<sup>q</sup> ch. 21: 36.  
<sup>r</sup> 1 ch. 25: 24.

recantation, and an open repudiation of his past course, here in the city where he received his letters, and before the officers and court from whom he received them.

20. Paul further refers to that particular instance of his persecuting zeal which also is recorded of him by the Holy Ghost, ch. 8: 3. ¶ *Thy martyr.* The word martyr is the same in Greek, and means *witness*, as in vs. 15. But as they who publicly witnessed for Christ most commonly suffered death for his sake, in the early history of the Church, this word came to mean, also, one who seals his public witness with his blood. Hence this secondary sense of the term, which is now the common one. See Rev. 17: 6. ¶ *Was shed—was poured out.* Though he died by stoning, doubtless it was a most bloody death; and Paul retained the vivid recollection of it, as a scene of blood. ¶ *I also—I myself, also, or, even I myself*—as the Jews at Jerusalem very well know, *was standing by, or standing over.* Same term as is used in vs. 13, and once rendered “*assaulted*,” also, “*came upon*” with hostile intent. Ch. 17: 5; Luke 20: 1; 21: 34; ch. 4: 1; 6: 12; 12: 7; 1 Thess. 5: 3. *I also was setting upon (him) and consenting to his death—concurring (with them) in his death.* The same word is used by Luke, ch. 8: 1. ¶ *Kept the raiment, &c.* “The witnesses”—those who were informants and accusers in the case, and whose duty by the law it was to throw the first stone—“laid down their clothes at a young man’s feet whose name was Saul,” ch. 7: 58. These were the upper garments, which they threw off so as to be unincum-

bered for stoning him. OBSERVE.—(1) How little confidence can we have in our own plans, based on common reasoning. It is God’s command which must guide us. (2) When we are strong in our own calculations, then are we weak.

21. The answer which Paul received from the Lord Jesus is now given, as his warrant and motive for the Gentile mission against his own plan and inclination. It was not that he loved the Jews less than the Gentiles, or had abated his interest in them at all, but that he received an absolute Divine command. ¶ *Depart—proceed—journey*, as commanded, vs. 18. There was no reasoning, only the Divine mandate unqualified. The only explanation is the Divine will. ¶ *For I.* I is here emphatic. This is enough; *I* (the Lord) *will send thee out* (as an Apostle.) This was fulfilled by the *commission* of the Holy Ghost through the Church at Antioch, ch. 13: 2; 3: 9. He departed to Syria and Cilicia, according to the plan of God, through the agency of the brethren, ch. 9: 30, and led by a plain providence, ch. 9: 29; see Gal. 1: 21. OBSERVE.—God executeth His decrees thus in the works of providence; which are His most holy, wise and powerful, preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions. ¶ *Unto the Gentiles*, ch. 13: 3 to 14: 28; 15: 36 to 18: 28; 19: 1 to the end. Rom. 1: 5; 11: 13, &c. See references.

22. Though up to this moment they had listened calmly, yet now he had come to a point beyond which they could not endure. The national pride of the Jews, as God’s chosen people, and their blind rage at the doctrine of

23 And as they cried out, and cast off *their* clothes, and threw dust into the air,

24 The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him.

25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, <sup>ma ch 16:37.</sup> "Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

admitting the Gentiles to an equality with themselves before God, could not be suppressed. *They continued to hear him until he came to this word*—this statement—namely, of his Divine mission to the Gentiles; but this, his testimony concerning Christ, they would not receive, vs. 18. So vain would it have been for him to labor at Jerusalem, as he had desired, (vs. 18:19.) OBSERVE.—So false are our calculations about influence and success on grounds of personal position and relation. ¶ *And (then) lifted up their voices*, as in the case of the Master Himself, saying, "away with him." Luke 23:28. *Off with him*—make way with him, see ch. 21:36. The word means to remove (as by death.) ¶ *Such a fellow*—literally, *the one who is such*, (as he,) *from the earth*. They aimed at nothing short of his death—for it is not (was not) fit that he should live—that is, he ought to have been put to death long ago; and he should not have been taken out of our hands, (ch. 21:32,) when we sought to kill him. They judged him as they had judged Stephen before, of speaking against Moses and the temple, by preaching such a doctrine of the universal extension of the Gospel, so contrary to their exclusive ideas of the ancient covenant. "Israelites who deny the law and the covenant, are legally condemned to death."

23. The rage of the crowd was expressed by violent yelling, hooting, and casting off their clothes, which may mean either tossing up their garments in token of rage, or throwing down their upper garments as men take off their coat, in a rage, to show that they are ready for violence. Or it may have been a shaking of the garments,

to shake off the very dust of contact with such a fellow. ¶ *Threw dust into the air*, as an expression of their wild and furious rage, like a bull driven to frenzy. This is a gesture of heated passion, which agrees with the Oriental custom at this day.

24. This fearful outbreak called for the interference of the chief captain, or tribune of the Romans, before spoken of, (vss. 31, 33.) He could not understand the language of the Apostle, and therefore supposing that some heinous offense had been committed, resorted to the military practice of the Romans and other heathen nations, to extort a confession from the accused by scourging, (*scourges*,) or beating with rods until he should confess. We must remember that this officer was leading Paul into the castle, bound with chains, when he asked leave to make his defense to the crowd on the stairs. His object in taking him into the castle had been to ascertain something of the facts, vs. 34. *Wherefore*, (for what accusation,) or legal charge, same word as Matt. 27:37; Mark 15:26, they cried so against him—so cried him down—with violent outcries.

25. *As they bound him*—rather, as they stretched him forward with the thongs, drawing him up to the whipping post in such a leaning posture as to receive the fullest force of the stripes upon his back. The mode of scourging was first to bind both the wrists to a column of wood, a cubit and a half high, so that the body should lean forward. Paul now asserts his right as a Roman citizen, claiming protection of the law. *The centurion that stood by*, was stationed there to superintend the punishment, see Luke 23:47. ¶ *Is it lawful*. By the Porcian and Sempronian laws a

26 When the centurion heard *that*, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman.

27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea.

28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was *free* born.

29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have || examined him: and the chief captain also <sup>|| Or, tortured him.</sup> was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

Roman citizen was exempt from stripes, even though he was condemned. Yet under the Jewish law, Paul had received from the Jews, on five occasions, thirty-nine stripes. 2 Cor. 11: 24. And even in Rome the Jews were sometimes allowed by the Emperors to put certain of their judicial laws in execution among themselves. ¶ *For you*—the Roman officers, who ought to execute the Roman law and protect Roman citizens, ch. 16: 37.

26. This question which implied that Paul was a Roman, alarmed the centurion, who went at once to the tribune or ethnarch, under whom he acted, and told (reported to) him saying, *Take heed* (see) *what you are about to do, for this man is a Roman*—has the rights of Roman citizenship, (see ch. 16: 37, 38,) which forbid his being scourged, and make it a penal offense.

27. This message at once brought the chief captain to Paul with an earnest inquiry into the facts of his alleged citizenship, for possibly he had laid himself open to a criminal accusation for binding a Roman citizen to the whipping-post, vs. 29. ¶ *Tell me* (lit.) *if thou art a Roman*. He, doubtless, asked this in surprise as well as for information. He at once felt it to be so important a matter, that he would be immediately assured of the fact from the Apostle himself.

28. The chief captain wonders how a poor man like Paul could have procured this right which he himself had obtained only at great cost. ¶ *With—* *for a great sum*. In the reign of Claudius, this title was sold, by his wife especially, at first for a great sum

and afterwards, indeed, for a “broken potsherd.” ¶ *This freedom—this citizenship*. ¶ *But I*—emphatic—in contrast with the former “I.” ¶ *Was free born—was also born such*—(i. e. a Roman, which is even better than to have it by purchase.) It is plain that his being a native of Tarsus, did not secure to him the right of Roman citizenship, though that city was exempt from taxation and was allowed its own laws. Paul had declared that he was born at Tarsus, ch. 21: 39; 22: 3, and the chief captain had, nevertheless, ordered him to be scourged, which he would not have dared to do, had he understood him to be a Roman citizen. This right then must have descended to him from his father or some ancestor, who obtained it by purchase or as a reward for service rendered to the state. (See ch. 16: 37, *Notes*.) Here, as at Philippi, we see the Apostle not immediately putting forward this claim, but only when it seemed necessary to save him from summary violence, and then using it rather just when it might serve the most important advantage of the cause, and work for its greatest protection and respect.

29. This declaration of Paul had the effect to stay all proceedings against him. The soldiers themselves *who were about to examine him* (by torture,) *stood off*, knowing the risk they ran of suffering severe penalties for thus treating a Roman citizen. *And the chief captain, indeed, was afraid—having ascertained that he is a Roman, and because he had bound him*—that is, with a view to scourging, (vs. 25,) which was contrary to the law, or because he had put



30 On the morrow, because he would have known the certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews, he loosed him from *his* bands, and commanded the chief priests and all their council to appear, and brought Paul down, and set him before them.

him in custody, ch. 21: 33. He began to tremble for what he had done, now that he found out that the prisoner could stand upon his rights. He began to fear the difficulties which he might be involved in, yet he did not immediately release him, but rather sought to justify his course so far as to bring him on the morrow (loosed) before the Sanhedrim. Bengel remarks that a stronger reason for his fear was, that Paul was a servant of God.

30. It is plain that the chief captain had, also, fears from the popular side—lest if he at once should set him free, he might raise a more violent tumult. Therefore we find him making a movement toward a Jewish trial, so as to conciliate the Jewish hostility. *On the morrow, wishing to know the certainty.* This is the third time his perplexity is noticed, vs. 24, ch. 21: 34,—*the why* (as to the reason why) *he is accused by the Jews*—what charge they have against him—he loosed him from the bonds (so that he should not appear before the Sanhedrim as his prisoner,) for the time, at least, for in ch. 23: 18, he is again spoken of as a prisoner. See ch. 24: 27; 26: 29. ¶ *Commanded.* He summoned the Supreme Jewish Court, (the Sanhedrim,) so entirely was the nation subject to the Romans, and reduced to such abject dependence. This court is here spoken of as *the chief priests* (the highest class,) and *the whole Sanhedrim of them.* Latest editions read without the pronoun “*of them.*” The court having assembled at his summons, he brought Paul down from the castle prison in the tower of Antonia, to the place where the court sat, and set him up—placed him on trial before them. This was formerly in the inner temple, in the chamber Gazith, but afterwards in a room on Zion, near the bridge that crossed the Tyropeon and connected the temple with Zion. Now they seem to have been summoned in

the outer court, ch. 28: 10. Thus it occurred that the chief captain and his soldiers who were with him as a guard of the prisoner, could enter the court room, as they could not have done if it had been in the temple apartments. Thus the Roman officer is willing to shift the responsibility upon the Jewish rulers, while by this providential ordering Paul is brought to make his defense before his own National Tribunal, and thus to vindicate the truth of Christ and His Gospel before the stubborn Jews, while he is under protection of the Gentiles.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

§ 35. PAUL'S SECOND DEFENSE—VIZ. BEFORE THE JEWISH SANHEDRIM. Jerusalem. A. D. 59. Ch. 23: 1-10.

Paul is now put upon his defense before the Supreme Court of his own nation, as Jesus and Stephen had been. He must have remembered the time when the latter was making that great argument, in which he preached this very doctrine of a world-wide Gospel before this persecuting court. Then Paul was himself either a member, or at least a commissioner of the Sanhedrim, and was taking the same *ultra*-Jewish view which now his relentless enemies are taking. Then he was intent on the death of all who held the doctrine which he himself now preaches, and for which they are hunting him down to the death. Providence is leading him on as the great Apostle to the Gentiles. The steps are taking which shall land him as a prisoner at Rome. But he must now make his final appeal to the Jewish nation, before their highest tribunal. The last time he had to do with this council, he was receiving a commission from them to persecute the Christians unto the death, ch. 7: 1. This Gospel of Christ was now to be publicly and officially rejected at

## CHAPTER XXIII.

1 AND Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men and brethren, <sup>a</sup> I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day.

2 And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him <sup>b</sup> to smite him on the mouth.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 24: 16.  
<sup>1</sup> Cor. 4: 4.  
<sup>2</sup> Cor. 1: 12, *et seq.*  
<sup>4: 2.</sup>  
<sup>2</sup> Tim. 1: 3.  
<sup>Heb. 13: 18.</sup>  
<sup>6</sup> 1 Kings 22: 24.  
<sup>Jer. 20: 2.</sup>  
<sup>John 18: 22.</sup>

his hands by the highest authorities of the Jewish Church, as it had been at the hand of Christ himself. And as in Asia Minor he had "begun at Jerusalem"—preaching in the synagogues and making the offer first to the Jews, and only when it was rejected by them turning to the Gentiles—so now, most formally and openly and officially, at head-quarters, he is to give his testimony and utter his vindication; and only then to go up to the great centre and seat of the heathen world, as a prisoner, at the instance of the Jewish nation, and as an appellant for the protection of the Gentiles, to whom he would carry the Gospel of Christ. How wonderful are the ways of God!

1. *Earnestly beholding.* Having fixed his eyes intently on the council, expressing thus his freedom, boldness, and calmness, as well as his good conscience, he seemed to challenge his enemies to contradict what he now had to say. ¶ *Men* (who are) *brethren*—addressing them as equals, in general terms, and conciliatory—whereas on the day previous he had addressed the assembly as *men, brethren, and fathers*. Here he is defining his position as a Jew, and showing his relation to God and the theocracy. They accuse him of acting in disobedience to the Mosaic institutions. He claims to *have lived* (as a citizen of the Hebrew commonwealth) *in all good conscience before God (to God) until this day*. The verb is that which is used by Paul in Phil. 1: 27, and is there rendered, "*Let your conversation be*"—more exactly, let your *citizenship* be. It is kindred to our term *politics*, and refers to the performance of one's duties as a citizen. His claim is, literally, *I have conducted myself as a citizen in all good conscience to God*. So he claims in 2

Tim. 1: 3, with reference also to his forefathers, as here in vs. 6. This claim, however, is merely in reference to men; and as a Jewish citizen he properly insists upon it before the high court of the nation, that he was chargeable with no violation of his duties as a member of that commonwealth, and under the jurisdiction of that court. Before God he acknowledges the great guiltiness of his past course. 1 Cor. 15: 9; 1 Tim. 1: 13, 16. His claim of conscientiousness, however, he constantly maintains, in respect to the law and tribunals of his nation. Ch. 24: 14, 15, 16; ch. 26: 5, 6, 7. And he insists that while before his conversion he lived according to the strictest sect of the Jewish religion, so, since his conversion—*until this day*—he had lived in obedience to the true spirit of the Mosaic institutions, and exercised himself to have *always* a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man.

2. *The high priest.* Ananias is so called by Luke, without any qualification. Annas was so called, ch. 4: 6, while Caiaphas exercised the office. Yet in view of what Paul says, vs. 5, it might seem that there was some ground of uncertainty in the title of Ananias to the office. This would agree with all that we know about the utter irregularity with which the high priesthood was shifted from one to another by the Roman authorities at this time. And it must be remembered that in the eye of the Jewish law, as the office was for life, one who held it by such unauthorized usurpation, and under such heathen appointment, was not of right high priest, though acting as such. Again, some maintain that the office was really vacant at this moment. The Roman govern-

Lev. 19:25.  
Deut. 25:1, 2.  
John 7:51.

3 Then said Paul unto him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and <sup>c</sup>commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

or, Quadratus—the predecessor of Felix, had sent this Ananias, with certain others, to Rome, to answer for disturbances between the Jews and Samaritans, which he was charged with having instigated. And though he seems to have been pardoned at the petition of Herod Agrippa, he found Jonathan acting as high priest at his return. This Jonathan, however, was assassinated by emissaries of Felix, and Ananias then probably resumed the office, as he retained the name and claim. Yet he may only have acted informally at this time, till Agrippa appointed Ishmael. But the facts are not clear from Josephus, and if they were fully known, we should better understand the reply of Paul, vs. 5. It is plain that there was more or less of confusion in the office at that time, and there is no doubt that this Ananias was a violent and cruel man. See Josephus, 20:8. ¶ *Them that stood by*—the *ὑπηρέτας*, servants, attending on the high priest. See ch. 4:1. ¶ *To smite him, &c*—literally, *to smite his mouth*. This was the Oriental mode of expressing indignation at what was said. It is a style of public reprimand still in use by the authorities of the East where objectionable language is used before them. It is done with a stick, or the heel of a slipper; yet it is regarded as unlawful before trial and condemnation. This, however, was only what the Great Master had suffered. John 18:22, 23. This act of the high priest was intended to rebuke Paul's claim to conscientiousness of living, and fidelity in his relations to the Mosaic institutions. They charged him with profaning and violating all that was sacred; and this bold disclaimer of his was treated as a gross insult to the court. See 1 Kings 22:24; Jer. 20:2.

3. *God shall smite thee*—literally, *is about to smite thee*. Paul replies, declaring the signal judgment which

would come upon this wicked ruler. He also spake out boldly, as the crisis and occasion every way seemed to demand. This is not to be charged against Paul as an outburst of passion which he afterwards regretted. He was set for the defense of the Gospel, and was here to maintain his cause as that which God would Himself openly vindicate. He thus uttered an inspired testimony, which was calculated at once to show his own consciousness of right, and his confident assurance that God would punish this offender, as He afterwards did; for this Ananias fell by the violent hand of assassins—the *sicarii*, or *ruffians*. Jos. B. J. 2:17, 19. Paul also here solemnly denounced the judgments of God against that apostate Israel which was represented by this vile and lawless high priest, whom therefore he calls, with great significance, *a whited wall*—a bare faced hypocrite, as he was like a sepulchre full of dead men's bones, and all corruption, but white-washed. This was not a personal rebuke, uttered in a fit of passion, but an inspired denunciation, spoken officially by the Apostle, whose part it was to testify against the false and hypocritical representatives of the Mosaic system. Matt. 10:19, 20. Hence, he makes a distinction between the law and the ruler—between the officer and the office. He regards the high priest as having abandoned the law and apostatized from its proper execution, not in his case merely nor mainly, but every way, and on this account he and those apostates whom he led, would be visited by God with swift destruction. The true Israel—the followers of the true Messiah—“the remnant according to the election of grace,” were here silenced in their representative, Paul, by the chief representative of the religious interest of the Jewish people, Ananias. And now he who falsely administered that high priesthood, must be denounced

4 And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest?

5 Then said Paul, <sup>a ch. 24:17.</sup> "I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, <sup>e Ex. 22:28. Eccles. 10:20. 2 Peter 2:10. Jude 8.</sup> "Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people."

for his impiety, and notified of the judgments that were soon to sweep away that whole system of heartless externals, so strikingly depicted as a *whited wall*, of mere outside show. See Matt. 23:27. ¶ *For sittest thou.* This is Paul's charge against Ananias, that he is the incumbent of this high and sacred office, and acting administrator of the Divine law for Israel, but himself the lawless one—a type of the *ἀνομος*, and "that wicked" whom God shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming. See 2 Thess. 2:8. ¶ *Sittest thou—literally, and dost thou sit,* (as occupying the "seat" of the chief religious officer and ruler of the covenant people,) *judging me* (as the head of the Supreme Jewish court) *according to the law,* (the judicial law of the Jews,) *and (yet) transgressing the law,* (in violation of the law,) *dost thou order me to be smitten?* It was contrary to the Jewish law that any one should be punished without full and fair trial. Deut. 19:15-18; Prov. 17:15. This was the ground of Paul's reply, in which he impeaches the acting high priest here in the name of Christ. Not Paul, but Ananias is a violator of God's law and covenant.

4. *They that stood by*—the attendants and servants of the high priest, as in vs. 2, where the same term is used. ¶ *Revilest thou.* Paul is here held to account for this language as a reviler of "God's high priest." They claim for this Ananias all the dignity and sanctity and prerogative of his office as God's high priest, against what Paul had already plainly intimated that he was acting in direct opposition to God, (vs. 3.) It was to this feature of their accusation that Paul replies, vs. 5, showing that he was well aware of the law, and only did not and could not recognize Ananias as a high priest,

and therefore was not chargeable with violating the law.

5. *I did not know*—literally, *I did not know that he is a high priest.* He does not say, *I did not know that he is the high priest.* But dropping the article that had been used in all the previous references to him, he pleads his utter ignorance in the vital point. Paul simply declares that he knew very well the law of the case, and highly respected the office, but did not *know* that Ananias is a veritable high priest at all, as he claims to be. How to understand that ignorance, is now the question. Plainly he is looking deeply at this highest religious office of the ancient Church, in the spirit of the Mosaic institutions. And now, he must declare that Ananias has only the whited surface—the mere exterior of the office, and nothing more. Indeed, it was no proof of his being a high priest according to the Jewish law—God's high priest,—that he sat in that seat, and wore the vestments of office, nor even that he was so accounted by the people. For the heathen Romans made and unmade these highest officers of the Jewish Church at their pleasure, and thus profaned the house and worship and covenant of God. And the mass of the people had apostatized, so that, in this sense, the Apostle could not know that Ananias was a high priest by the mere outside garb of the office. Besides, he knew that this man was a lawless violator of all the sanctity of the high priesthood. He could not regard him, therefore, as a true successor of Aaron. Further, the great High Priest had come, and now this man was a false claimant, and the system of which Ananias was the representative and head was virtually abolished and ready to vanish away. Paul could, therefore, have replied, *I know that he is not*

6 But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men and brethren, 'I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

ch. 26:5.  
Phil. 3:5.  
g ch. 24:15-21,  
and 26:6, and  
28:20.

a high priest. He contents himself with meekly saying, *I did not know that he is a high priest*, for (I know full well the law, and that law is the rule of my life,) *it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*. He meant, therefore, to intimate that his ignorance of Ananias' official dignity, and his treatment of him, grew out of his knowledge of the law, not the contrary; and it was just because he knew all the law of the high priesthood, and took a profound view of it and held it in highest respect, that he did not know that Ananias is (really) a high priest at all, ch. 4:11. In all this he is officially bearing witness for God against the rebellious nation, and the Lord Jesus expressly indorses this testimony, vs. 11.

6. When Paul perceived—lit., *Paul knowing*, i. e. from his familiar acquaintance with the facts, and not as though he had suddenly found it out, and then took advantage of it. He knew the state of the parties at that time—for their rivalry was notorious and bitter, so that what either of them approved, the other would be likely to oppose for this very reason. And now he makes this last effort to win over the Sanhedrim to the Gospel doctrine—reaching them at this best, likeliest point of their common ground with him as against sheer infidelity. The Pharisees were the more numerous and popular class in the community, though they seem to have been very equally balanced with the Sadducees in the Sanhedrim at this time. And these latter were the more aristocratic and influential sect, and had been the leaders of persecutions against the Apostles, as the Pharisees had been against Christ. The Pharisees held to the Scriptures more strictly than the Sadducees, who were rather the skeptics of the time and denied the doctrine of the spirit world and the resurrection, (vs. 8.)

Paul, therefore, in the full knowledge that it would enrage the Sadducees against him, still boldly avowed himself a believer and teacher of the great vital doctrine of the resurrection. Some have alleged against him that this was a mere stroke of worldly policy—to “divide and conquer.” But such critics take the carnal view of the matter, and judge Paul too much by themselves. His object was surely the truth and not victory. He all along vindicated himself as “a Hebrew of the Hebrews,” and as touching the law, “a Pharisee,” just to make out the ground he had for boasting before Jews, and as between himself and his Jewish opposers. (Phil. 3:5.) This was every way proper ground to take against their accusation of apostasy from the religion of their fathers. It was the same ground which he afterwards took in his defense before Agrippa, (ch. 26:5, 6,) that after the strictest sect of their religion, (equally professed in the worship of Pharisees and Sadducees, who attended the same temple services,) he had lived a Pharisee. And further, that he ought not to be accused of apostasy, since properly understood it was *for the hope and resurrection of the dead* that he was called in question—that is, “for the hope of the promise made of God unto their (Jewish) fathers,” ch. 26:6. When he calls himself a Pharisee by eminence, “*the son of a Pharisee*,” in all his ancestry and antecedents, he does not mean to convey the impression that he is not a Christian, which he directly and distinctly avows in the Christian hope. But he had always belonged to the strictest Jewish party, and as between Pharisees and Sadducees, had been educated and well known, as of the former and more rigorous class, (ch. 26:4, 5,) and now, so far from abjuring the ancient covenant, he only held to all that was truly conveyed in

7 And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

8 <sup>a</sup> For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, <sup>a</sup> neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. <sup>a</sup> Matt. 22:23.  
Mark 12:18.  
Luke 20:27.

9 And there arose a great cry: and the Scribes *that were of the Pharisees'* part arose, and strove, saying, <sup>1</sup> We <sup>b</sup> find no evil in this man: but <sup>c</sup> if a spirit or an angel hath <sup>d</sup> spoken to him, <sup>e</sup> let us not fight against God. <sup>b</sup> ch. 25:25, and 26:31.  
<sup>c</sup> ch. 22:7, 17, 18.  
<sup>d</sup> ch. 5:39.

the covenant promises—the *hope* of Israel, ch. 28:20. The same position he takes before Felix, ch. 24—claiming to be a worshiper of the God of his fathers, and a believer of all the Jewish Scriptures, (both law and prophets,) (vs. 14,) and though at the same time a believer in the resurrection, yet sustained in this by a large and leading portion of the Jewish people—the Pharisees—“*which they themselves also allow*,” (vs. 15,) and as to his conduct challenging accusation, (vss. 16, 17–20.) ¶ *Of the hope.* It may read, *concerning, or for the sake of a hope, and (even) a resurrection of the dead.* The idea is that the great point at issue in his trial was a *hope*, as involved in the doctrine of the resurrection, a hope which is the Christian hope. This doctrine is vital in the Christian system, for if Christ be not risen, “our faith is vain”—there is no salvation wrought out and attested by this seal of His resurrection; and then besides, “we are yet in our sins”—there is no remission by the blood-shedding of Christ, as we hope. (1 Cor. 15:12.) ¶ *Called in question*—literally, *I am judged*—put on trial.

7. This declaration of Paul started in the Sanhedrim the great question upon which they split; the Pharisees on this point being bitterly opposed to the Sadducees. ¶ *A dissension*—(σάσις) meaning rather a *party-quarrel*, as before, ch. 15:2. ¶ *The multitude*—the crowd of bystanders, as well as the council, *was divided*—rent into a schism.

8. Here follows a statement of the opposing tenets of these two Jewish leading sects. ¶ *The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit.* They were the skeptics of the

time, holding the grossest materialism; denying the resurrection of the body, and the spirit-world altogether; hence, also, denying a future state of retribution. ¶ *But the Pharisees confess both*, as tenets of theirs. Here they came into bitter collision, excited by this avowal of Paul that in these doctrines he sided, as he had always done, with the Pharisees.

9. *And there arose (became—came to pass) a great cry* (clamor.) So intense was the excitement as to break out into an uproar. ¶ *The Scribes*, (or learned expounders of the law, who would naturally take the lead in such an argument,) *who were of the Pharisees' party, rising up, contended vehemently*—excited by this declaration of Paul on their side, and moved to defend him against the Sadducees, their enemies. ¶ *We find nothing evil.* So entirely do they at once espouse his cause, and clamor for his release. They put it also on high religious grounds. ¶ *But if a spirit or an angel* (neither of which the Sadducees would admit as real existences,) *spoke to him*—if he has indeed had any communication from the spirit-world, (referring to his narrative of his conversion, and the appearing of the Lord to him in the trance, ch. 22:6, 7, 17, &c.) ¶ *Let us not, &c.* This clause is omitted in some editions, in which case the sentence would be incomplete, having to be supplied something like this—“this is nothing impossible, as you Sadducees would insist.” And if the clause is left in the text, then the idea is, that such a communication from above, as Paul had narrated, might possibly be from God Himself, and in condemning him

10 And when there arose a great dissension, the chief captain, fearing lest Paul should have been pulled in pieces of them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring *him* into the castle.

m. ch. 18:9, and 27:23, 24.

11 And <sup>m</sup>the night following, the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

they might be found *fighting against God*. This was taking high ground for their tenets, as they naturally would. The doctrine of the resurrection and a future state of being, is taught in the Old Testament, (see Luke 20:37; Job 19:25,) though it was reserved to our Lord to *bring life* and immortality to light in the Gospel. (2 Tim. 1:10.)

10. And—literally, *a great quarrel arising*, (or coming to pass,) *the chief captain* (chiliarch) *fearing lest Paul should be pulled asunder by them*, (the Sadducees aiming to take him, and the Pharisees aiming to rescue him,) *commanded the soldiers* (the military force which he had, vs. 27,) *to go down* (to descend from the tower (castle) of Antonia, to the outer court of the temple where the affray was going on, see ch. 22:30,) *to seize* (snatch) *him from their midst*, and *to lead him unto the castle*. Thus it occurs in the wonder-working providence of God, that while the highest representation of the religious interest of Israel is broken up in a mad uproar, and Paul is in danger of falling a sacrifice to their violent strife, he is again protected from their fury by the representative of the great Gentile nation, which called herself “the mistress of the world.”

11. All this Roman protection, however, is only the instrument of a higher power. ¶ *The night following*, (this outbreak,) when Paul was in the custody of Roman soldiers in the castle, and when, naturally enough, he might despair of his mission and of his life, *the Lord* (Jesus) *standing by* (upon) *him*, said, *Take courage, Paul*. It was a personal appearing of our Lord to Paul—not in a dream, but in an apparition, in which he was seen by Paul, as standing beside him, and was

heard as addressing him. It was a charge to yield to no fear, but to be courageous, in view of all the fixed plan of God for his future service. This at once assured him (1) Of a safe deliverance from his present distress. (2) Of his certain arrival at Rome, according to his cherished desire. (3) Of his future labors at Rome in the Gospel. And this disclosure of the Divine plan would comfort him as to his safety, (1) Often and severely as he would be threatened by the Jews; (2) in prison at Cesarea; (3) in shipwreck; (4) in prison at Rome. OBSERVE.—The revelation to us of God's fixed purpose often gives greatest courage and comfort to true believers. Every evidence we have that “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ our Lord,” is given to cheer us. So all the references to God's gracious personal decrees, in the Ephesians and Romans, and every where in the New Testament, are highly comforting, and intended to animate us, as here, to a holy courage. So again, ch. 27:24, a similar revelation was made to Paul. “Fear not, thou must stand before Cæsar.” See also ch. 18:9, 10. How amply is Paul prepared by this good word for the developments of a most bloody hostility that was on the morrow to lay a plot for his death. ¶ *For as thou hast*, &c. Here our Lord fully approves Paul's testimony at Jerusalem, which he had borne before the high priest and council and people, as he never before had been able nor allowed to do; and no exception is taken to any word of his as rash or unadvised, but the testimony had doubtless been given him to utter, as was promised to the Apostles, (Matt. 10:18, 19.) ¶ *Thou must*—literally, *it is necessary that thou,*

12 And when it was day, "certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves || under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul

<sup>vs 21-23.</sup>  
<sup>ch. 24:1.</sup>  
<sup>|| Or with an oath of execration.</sup>

13 And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy.

14 And they came to the chief priests and elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, that we will eat nothing until we have slain Paul.

15 Now therefore ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, as though ye would

&c. "Danger, in God's eye, is nothing."—Bengel. ¶ *At Rome also.* He is now advised of the Divine plan, which will lead him to Rome for similar witness-bearing in the metropolis of the heathen world. Accordingly, the remainder of the history narrates the steps by which he was led hither; so that the "very hindrances prove advantages." The promise reaching to a distance embraced all the nearer and intermediate points. "Paul should bear witness at Rome; therefore, he should come to Rome; therefore, he should escape the plots of the Jews, and the dangers of the sea, and fatal injury from the viper."—Bengel. So all God's decrees include the means no less than the end.

12. *And when it was day, certain of the Jews*—inflamed to the highest pitch by this excitement, which came to be sectarian—*having formed a combination—anathematized themselves (bound themselves by a curse—an oath of devotement or destruction if they violated the pledge,) that they would neither eat nor drink till (the time that) they should slay Paul.* Such oaths and imprecations were not uncommon among the Jews, who often thus bound themselves to perpetrate the most horrid crimes under a religious obligation, especially to slay apostates.—*Josephus Vit.* 53. *Antiq.* xv. 8, 3, 4. They were encouraged to this, as they could easily get absolution from their vow by the Rabbins. See 1 Sam. 14 : 24. This record gives us an insight of the fanatical and furious hatred with which the Jews pursued Paul. All their malignant hostility against the Master, hunt-

ing him to death, is revived now in their persecution of this eminent minister of Christ. And it was calculated to keep him always reminded of his own bitter hostility against the Christians. The cup of their furious enmity and rage is now full; and this will shortly lead the Apostle from Jerusalem to Rome.

13. *More than forty.* Thus it was a fair expression of the popular feeling. So many were engaged in it—as if "the Jews" generally, (vs. 12.) So Josephus tells us of ten Jews having bound themselves, by solemn oath, to assassinate Herod. In the true spirit of Pharisaism they thought—as Paul himself had done—that in putting heretics to death they were doing God service. It was part of their religious system, as it is of the Papacy since, and hence they bound themselves to it by a solemn religious oath, and did not blush to bring it before the highest religious authorities of the nation. 2 Sam. 3 : 35. Our Lord's prediction is now fulfilled, as it was before when Saul himself was the persecutor. John 16 : 2. See ch. 18 : 1-4.

14. *Came to the chief priests*—as Judas had done in the betrayal of our Lord to death. The chief religious headship of the Jewish Church and nation (whose duty it was to have prevented it,) was thus made privy to the crime and party in it. ¶ *Eat nothing*—literally, *taste nothing.* "The utmost rashness," says Bengel, "even if they had had a good cause! How perplexed they must have been when they were not able to accomplish it!"

15. *Now therefore, &c.* How utterly



enquire something more perfectly concerning him : and we, or ever he come near, are ready to kill him.

16 And when Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, he went and entered into the castle, and told Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions unto *him*, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain : for he hath a certain thing to tell him.

corrupt must have been this chief religious judicature, when men would dare to make to them such an atrocious proposal ; and what is worse, with the confidence of success ; and what is still worse, without any opposition, but rather with hearty concurrence. (See vs. 21.) The plot was that the council signify—a legal term meaning to give official notice—to the chief captain, that he bring him down unto you to-morrow, from the tower of Antonia to where the Sanhedrim sat in the temple court, (or as some think, to the house of the high priest, at a greater distance, where they met on extraordinary occasions,) as though ye would (as being about) to determine more exactly the things concerning him. The pretense was that the Sanhedrim wished to make up a more full and exact verdict in the case. Inasmuch as the judicial proceedings had been interrupted the day before, this was altogether a plausible request. The conspirators state plainly their purpose. ¶ And we, or ever he come near, (before his coming near,) are ready to kill him—(make way with him.) Their plot was to lie in wait for the Apostle, and on his way from the fortress to assassinate him. It would seem, from vs. 21, that this proposal met no opposition from the council, and that all was ready and waiting the action of the chief captain. See ch. 22 : 30. They proposed thus to save them any further trouble with his case. This is the bloody spirit of a proud and heartless hierarchy, to make an end of heretics.

16. Though all this was thus planned for the morrow, it was wonderfully defeated by God's providence. ¶ Paul's sister's son. We know nothing more of this nephew than is here recorded, nor even how he came to be in Jerusalem

at this time. It is enough to know that in the most natural way, by means of his relative, God interposes to deliver Paul from these fiendish machinations. The conspirators had managed the affair with little or no secrecy, relying on the general sympathy with them, and supposing there would be no one to inform Paul or the Roman officer. But man proposes and God disposes. ¶ Heard—the ambuscade—as if he had somewhere heard the plan detailed. This youth may have been present at the Sanhedrim, or thereabouts, when the plot was openly proposed. ¶ He went—having come and entered into the castle, he told Paul. It appears from this that Paul was not confined as a common prisoner, but was kept in military custody as at Cesarea, (ch. 24 : 23,) given in charge of a soldier, who was chained with his left hand to the prisoner's right hand, access being allowed to the prisoner, who was even supposed to reside in a private house under their charge. Thus it comes to pass that while the Jewish Church and nation were hunting the Apostle unto death, he finds his protection under that Gentile power which claimed to be “the mistress of the world.”

17. Though Paul had been assured of his safety, he used all proper means—knowing that God's promise does not dispense with means, but provides for them and encourages their use, and secures to them success. Doubtless, also, the Church of God is making earnest and concerted prayer for him—banding together in a holy conspiracy at the mercy seat, while more than forty murderers are plotting for his death. ¶ One of the centurions—of whom there seemed to be more than one on guard, near him. ¶ Bring—

18 So he took him, and brought *him* to the chief captain, and said, Paul the prisoner called me unto *him*, and prayed me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say unto thee.

19 Then the chief captain took him by the hand, and went *with him* aside privately, and asked *him*, What is that thou hast to tell me?

20 And he said, °The Jews have agreed to desire thee ° vs. 12. that thou wouldest bring down Paul to-morrow into the council, as though they would enquire somewhat of him more perfectly

21 But do not thou yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, which have bound themselves with an oath, that they will neither eat nor drink till they have killed him: and now are they ready, looking for a promise from thee.

rather, *lead away this youth to the chief captain, (wherever he was,) for he hath, &c.* "It was safer to tell the chief captain himself."—Bengel.

18. *So.*—These details are thus minutely recorded and seem to be the statements of an eye witness; and the fullness of particulars is given because a great crisis is at hand and every item is of great moment. ¶ *And said.* The centurion carefully explains *his own* action in the matter. The prompt compliance of this officer was only what was due to a Roman citizen, and he probably understood that the information was important. ¶ *Paul the prisoner.* The term here denotes that he was still chained. See vs. 16, note.

19. *Took him by the hand*—indicating an eager interest in what concerned the case of this prisoner, and extending to the youth this mark of confidence. ¶ *Went*—literally, *having retired privately*, (gone into a private apartment,) *interrogated him, What is it?* This shows the great desire of the chief captain to get all the information to himself, and the appearance is also of excited solicitude, as he himself had possibly gone too far with a Roman citizen. How we are reminded of the worried, troubled Pilate, with such an one as Jesus for his prisoner, who was King of kings. OBSERVE.—A youth who seems to have been but a lad, just by promptly giving information against crime, is the means of saving the most valuable life, perhaps, in the world.

20. The simple story of the youth is here rehearsed. ¶ *Agreed*—literally, *conspired*, concerted a plot, *for asking thee*—not as a prayer of petitioners, but rather as a dignified and official request, (as the term indicates,) which, with the term previously used denoting *official notice*, would signify a formal request which it might be presumed would be granted. The same terms are used in the further statement, except that instead of the verb to *ascertain* or *determine*, (rendered *inquire*,) we have here the verb to *interrogate*, and also rendered "inquire," though quite a different word, and the same as used of the chief captain asking of the lad, vs. 19.

21. *But*—rather, *therefore, do not thou yield to them*, or be persuaded by them, *for* (this is the sufficient reason given, namely the *plot* of which he knew,) *there lie in wait for him* (already so far advanced in the matter) *of them*, (as though these were only a club of volunteers from among the whole people, who were all equally hostile to Paul.) ¶ *And now they are ready*—to kill him—in execution of their plot. The lad seems to have known the fact of their being in actual readiness—waiting for the request to be made by the Sanhedrim and *for the promise*, (the promise expected by them on which the whole scheme depended, in compliance with their wicked request,) viz. that Paul should be sent to the Sanhedrim.

22 So the chief captain *then* let the young man depart, and charged *him*, *See thou tell no man that thou hast shewed these things to me.*

23 And he called unto *him* two centurions, saying, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go to Cesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night;

24 And provide *them* beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring *him* safe unto Felix the governor.

25 And he wrote a letter after this manner :

22. The chief captain was satisfied with the lad's statements as carrying with them the evidence of truth, and he acted promptly but cautiously—not disclosing his determination, and enjoining secrecy upon the lad in regard to the fact of his having informed him of the plot. He feared that by any mention of the interview, his own measures might be frustrated; and lest the Jews might take new steps for Paul's death. ¶ *To tell—to speak out—to reveal the secret.*

23. The historian here gives the minutest details. Lysias immediately *summoning certain two of his (ten) centurions, said, Prepare two hundred soldiers, (footmen,) that they may go as far as Cesarea.* The two centurions were to take charge also of the expedition, and there were two, as the forces were to divide at Antipatris and a part to return, viz. the infantry, vs. 32, ch. 24: 23. Cesarea was sixty to seventy miles north-west from Jerusalem. Here another centurion and his household were gathered as the first fruits of the Gentiles, ch. 10. ¶ *Spearmen*—literally, *using the right hand*, and therefore rendered *spearmen*—men who wield their weapon with the right hand, a kind of light infantry—*lancers*. Such a force could be spared from the garrison for a day—the prisoner being a Roman citizen, must be protected against the conspirators and against any possible onset of the Jewish populace, who were fanatical and furious. This ample escort was to be made ready *at* (literally, *from*) *the third hour of the night*, so as to start by that time—corresponding with our nine o'clock—the setting in of the night, when they could move under cover of the darkness, and early

enough for a full night's journey. These three kinds of troops comprise the entire military armament of the ancients.

24. *Beasts*—for riding—horses, mules. More than one would be needed for Paul's use—a change of them is provided, and perhaps also for baggage, *in order that, having mounted Paul, (on one of the beasts,) they might bring him safe through (the route and dangers) to Felix, the governor.* This man was made Procurator of Samaria, and afterwards (upon the exile of Cumanus,) of Judea and Galilee, by the Emperor Claudius; having been originally his slave. He held the office also under Nero, the successor of Claudius, until Porcius Festus was substituted for him. Tacitus says that “he exercised the power of a king in the spirit of a slave, with all cruelty and lust;” and he was married richer than Crassus by nearly twenty thousand pounds sterling. “His procuratorship was one series of disturbances, false Messiahs, sicarii and robbers and civil contests,” and his conduct only fanned the flame of tumult. He procured the assassination of Jonathan the high priest, through whom principally he had attained his elevation. *Jos. Ant. xx. 8, 5.*

25. *Wrote*—literally, *writing an epistle having* (containing) *this exact form* (type.) (Very much the same terms are used 1 Macc. 15 : 2.) Some understand that this is merely the purport of the letter. But it bears the marks of a copy, and the terms warrant this understanding of it. We need not know where Luke obtained a copy. The Inspiring Spirit is Himself the ample resource. The Roman law required that such a letter should be sent with a prisoner.

26 Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix *sendeth* greeting.

27 <sup>p ch. 21:33, and 24:7.</sup> This man was taken of the Jews, and should have been killed of them: then came I with an army, and rescued him, having understood that he was a Roman.

28 <sup>q ch. 22:30.</sup> And when I would have known the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him forth into their council:

29 Whom I perceived to be accused <sup>r ch. 18:15, and 23:19.</sup> of questions of their law, <sup>s ch. 25:21.</sup> but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds.

26. This letter thus exactly given here, discloses to us the name of the chief captain. The first name is Latin, the second Greek, and the letter may have been in either tongue, but probably in the Greek. (See the salutation.) *The most excellent* is the title which was commonly given to the Roman dignitaries, and which was applied to Theophilus, Luke 1:3; and to Festus, ch. 26:25; see 24:3. ¶ *Sendeth greeting*—literally, *to rejoice*—wishing you to rejoice—joy be to you. This was the customary Greek salutation in formal epistles, as in that of the Synod at Jerusalem, ch. 15:23, and in the Epistle of James, ch. 1:1.

27. Here follows the message—literally, *this man having been seized by the Jews, (tumultuously,) and being just about to be destroyed by them—coming up with the military, I rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman.* The chief captain here wishes to be understood that he interfered for Paul, on account of learning that he was a Roman citizen. This would gain him some favor for his loyalty. But in truth he had not known of Paul's citizenship till he had unlawfully-bound him. See ch. 22:25-29. He aims, therefore, to conceal the injustice and violence of which he was chargeable, and to misrepresent the case to his own advantage. This cunning artifice furnishes clear evidence of the simple truth of the history, and skeptical critics are constrained so to admit. "This is just what we might expect from a clever worldling, who had more regard for the favor of his superiors

than for the truth." *Birk's Hor. Apostol.*, ii. 14. We can scarcely suppose that this was an inadvertence of Lysias, when he was making so formal a statement as in this letter. It was very adroitly worded so as to be in a sense true, as he did at length interfere when he knew that he was a Roman; yet it was so framed as to conceal his own fault.

28, 29. *And wishing to know the charge* (ground of legal condemnation,) *on account of which they accused him, I brought him down into their council, (Sanhedrim,) whom I found* (found out—discovered on inquiry) *to be accused concerning discussions* (topics of dispute) *of their law*—the Mosaic law, as to whether he had spoken against Moses and the temple, (ch. 24:6,) and as to whether he held the doctrine of the resurrection, ch. 23:6-9. Lysias, like Gallio, cared for none of those things which embroiled the Jews, and regarded these "questions of words and names, and of their law," as something with which he had nothing to do, (ch. 18:15,) because they did not properly come under his cognizance as a civil officer. ¶ *But having no accusation worthy of death or of bonds.* It was his fault, however, that he had proceeded to bind him, and was about scourging him, contrary to law, and before trial and condemnation. NOTE.—"Every Roman magistrate before whom Paul is brought, declares him innocent." The great representative kingdom of the Gentiles affords kind protection, while the religious authority of the Jews plots for his death.

<sup>t</sup> vs. 20.

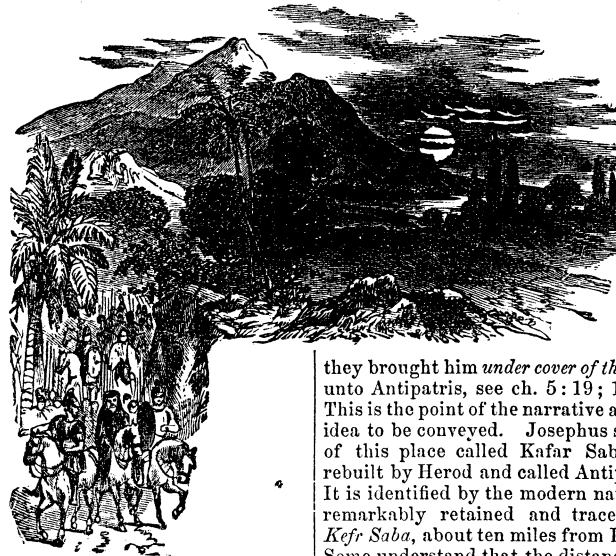
30 And <sup>u</sup>when it was told me how that the Jews laid wait for the man, I sent straightway to thee, and <sup>u</sup>gave commandment to his accusers also to say before thee what *they had* against him. Farewell.

31 Then the soldiers, as it was commanded them, took Paul, and brought *him* by night to Antipatris.

30. *But a plot (design) against the man having been reported to me as on foot, (to be brought to pass, vs. 20,) I sent immediately to thee, having charged also the accusers to say the things relating to him before thee—that is, with the intention of so charging them after Paul's departure. ¶ Farewell—literally, be strong—like the Latin, valet, used in the same way. OBSERVE.—Lysias represents (1) That Paul was not in custody as a convict, but had been res-*

cued from a mob. (2) That he had been since examined before the Sanhedrim, but was accused of no crime, but merely of erroneous opinions; and (3) That Paul was a Roman, and entitled to full protection. This was a considerate, kind and faithful statement of the case.

31. *Antipatris.* The escort proceeded by a Roman road, which has been distinctly traced out by Drs. Eli Smith and Robinson, passing by way of Goph-



na, about midnight, and thence turning from the road to Neapolis, toward the coast, westward. Antipatris was reckoned forty-two Roman miles from Jerusalem, and twenty-six from Cesarea. It is not meant that they brought *him* all the way to Antipatris, but that

they brought him *under cover of the night* unto Antipatris, see ch. 5:19; 17:10. This is the point of the narrative and the idea to be conveyed. Josephus speaks of this place called Kafar Saba, but rebuilt by Herod and called Antipatris. It is identified by the modern name, so remarkably retained and traced out, *Kefr Saba*, about ten miles from Lydda. Some understand that the distance was actually accomplished over night by six, A. M. Others that they halted as Nicopolis for the day, and proceeded the next night. Others that it was mostly by night, though occupying two or three hours of the next morning.

32 On the morrow they left the horsemen to go with him, and returned to the castle:

33 Who, when they came to Cesarea, and delivered the epistle to the governor, presented Paul also before him.

34 And when the governor had read *the letter*, he asked of what province he was. And when he understood that *he was* of <sup>ch. 21:30.</sup> Cilicia;

35 I will hear thee, said he, when thine accusers are <sup>ch. 24:1, 10, and 25:16.</sup> also come. And he commanded him to be kept in <sup>Matt. 27:37.</sup> Herod's judgment hall.

32. *On the morrow.* This would be the day after arriving at Antipatris, which, by the Jewish reckoning, would begin with the evening after they left Jerusalem. Inasmuch as now the Apostle had been escorted beyond the bounds of the danger, two of the three divisions turned back, leaving him in charge of the cavalry, seventy in number. This seems to have been not according to orders, as they were made ready to go to Cesarea, and were charged to carry him safely through. It would seem that they were not longer needed for the escort.

33. *Who*—the horsemen, that were left by the other two divisions, in charge of Paul. ¶ *Presented Paul.* They presented the epistle of Lysias to the governor, and with it the prisoner Paul, of whom he wrote. Thus they executed their commission. This instance of military protection enjoyed by the Apostle, is cited by the African fathers in an early Council in favor of seeking military defense against enemies.

34, 35. *And—the governor having read the letter of Lysias, he inquired of what province he (Paul) is.* As he was declared to be a Roman citizen, this was a natural question at the outset, as he would know the particulars of his citizenship. He could make official inquiry of the governor of Cilicia if he was in any doubt as to the fact. The term for “*province*”—*eparchy*—is a general term for imperial and senatorial provinces. There were laws regulating such provincial relations, and one governor was not at liberty to rely entirely on another's letter, but

must himself make thorough investigation. The deputy was bound by law to refer any serious case to the governor. When he was informed (in answer to his inquiry) *that he (Paul) was of (the province of) Cilicia, I will hear thee through, (in regular trial,) he said, when also thine accusers are present*—so as to hear both sides. These terms are technical, and show the marks of historical verity and accuracy. ¶ *And he commanded him to be kept (under guard) in the pretorium of Herod*—in buildings attached to the palace erected by Herod the Great, who rebuilt Cesarea, and formerly occupied by him when he resided there. The palace at Cesarea, like the Vatican at Rome, probably had a prison attached to it, as was the case in ancient times; though it would seem that Paul was only kept under guard, and not thrust into any common prison. NOTE.—The seizure of Paul by the great Gentile power proves to be his protection. He is brought now by this wonder-working Providence to utter his defense before a new dignitary of the same *Mistress of the World.*

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

§ 36. PAUL'S THIRD DEFENSE—BEFORE FELIX, THE ROMAN GOVERNOR. *Cesarea.* A. D. 59. Ch. 24: 1-21.

Here we find Paul, for the first time, put upon his trial before the representative of the great Heathen Empire of the world. His accusers are the representatives of the Sanhedrim, or Supreme religious Court of the Jewish nation. Thus it appears that the Apostles

## CHAPTER XXIV.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 21: 27.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 23: 2, 30,  
 35, and 25: 2.

1 AND after <sup>a</sup>five days <sup>b</sup>Ananias the high priest descended with the elders, and *with a certain orator named Tertullus*, who informed the governor against Paul.

tle, and in him the Christian doctrine, and Christ Himself who is persecuted in His members, are formally rejected by the people of the ancient covenant. Paul's vocation in Jerusalem is fulfilled. Henceforth the history looks toward the metropolis of heathendom, and Paul is to go forward to fulfill also his work at Rome. This trial also gives us some insight of the calumnies heaped by the Jewish leaders upon the early Christians, and the treacherous arts employed against them. Yet this our Lord had forewarned—that they should be brought before governors and kings for His name's sake—and He had promised that it should be given them in that same hour, without studied preparation, what they ought to speak. (Matt. 10 : 19, 20.) Paul's defense is calm, out-spoken, and to the point—still laboring to convince his countrymen of his true and honest adherence to the covenants, properly understood; and to the last, like his Master, claiming to be a friend and lover of his nation. Felix, alas! is only another Pilate; yet Paul is virtually acquitted, even before him. He is not now pleading his cause as in the *First* Defense before the Jewish multitude, nor as in the *Second* Defense before the Jewish Sanhedrim, but before the Representative of the chief Gentile Empire of the world. And under the protection of these Gentile laws and arms, the great Apostle of the Gentiles has the opportunity to preach Christ.

1. *After five days* from Paul's arrival at Cesarea. *Levin* gives the chronology of the days from his arrival at Jerusalem to his trial before Felix, thus—(8th May,) Paul arrived at Jerusalem. (9th,) Pentecost and Presbytery held, (ch. 21 : 18.) (10th,) Paul goes to the temple with the four Nazarites, (ch. 21 : 26.) (11th,) Second day of the Nazarite's week. (12th,) Third day. (13th,) Fourth day. (14th,) Fifth day, and Paul is apprehended in the temple, ch. 21 : 27. (15th,) Before the Sanhedrim, ch. 22 : 30; 24 : 1–10. (16th,) The conspiracy against Paul's life, ch. 23 : 12, 31. At nine o'clock at night Paul is dispatched to Cesarea. (17th,) Paul reaches Cesarea, ch. 23:24. (18, 19, 20, 21.) At Cesarea, ch. 24 : 1. (22d,) Paul before Felix. See also vs. 11. We may reckon “the twelve days” as above, understanding that of the four days “at Cesarea,” the first was the day of his arrival there, and the last the day of his trial; and that the reckoning does not include the day of his arrival at Jerusalem. It was twelve days (from) *since* that day. ¶ *Ananias*. The chief captain, Lysias, had notified to the Sanhedrim that Paul's case was referred to the governor, and cited them to appear there, with their charges. Accordingly they follow it up with a bitter determination, and with all haste. *The high priest* Ananias (descended) *went down* (from Jerusalem to Cesarea—the term used of going away from Jerusalem,) *with the elders*, (not necessarily all of them, but a commission of them for the purpose,) “Ananias rankling at his heart for the affront he had received in the presence of the Sanhedrim,” as “*the whited wall*”—and with the elders representing the Church and nation of the Jews. *And (with) a certain orator* (the only instance in Scripture in which this word occurs, and meaning the professional rhetorician, and the forensic orator.) named *Tertullus*—(a Latin name diminutive of Tertius: and probably, as ch. 24 : 2, he separates himself from *this nation*.) He was a Roman who better understood the Roman language, and mode of pleading before a Roman court—who (that is, he and they, all) *informed—laid information* (probably by word of mouth) *to the governor against Paul*. This is used in a technical sense. The trial

2 And when he was called forth, Tertullus began to accuse *him*, saying, Seeing that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and that very worthy deeds are done unto this nation by thy providence,

3 We accept *it* always, and in all places, most noble Felix, with all thankfulness.

4 Notwithstanding, that I be not further tedious unto thee, I pray thee that thou wouldest hear us of thy clemency a few words.

5 ° For we have found this man *a pestilent fellow*, and *a mover of sedition* among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes :

c Luke 23:2,  
ch. 6:13, and  
16:20, and 17:6  
and 21:28,  
1 Peter 2:12, 15

however, may have been in Greek, which was allowed.

2. *Called forth.* He was formally cited to appear (from the guard-room) as soon as the charge had been laid against him before the governor. Tertullus opened the case, stating formally the charges, as follows: He well understood what Grotius says—"It is one of the rules of rhetoric to secure the good will of the judge by praising him." This was especially the habit of that corrupt time. He adroitly says, in praise of Felix, all that could be said—viz. that he had put down some disturbances of the peace, having even assumed the title of "Pacifier of the Province." Yet he himself, in some of his cruel movements, fanned the flame of discord. ¶ *Very worthy deeds—conservative deeds*, (such as just referred to) *becoming to this nation* (coming to pass) *by your provision*, (administration.) Imperial coins at that time bore the title *Providentia Cesaris*; the Emperors claiming Divine attributes and homage. Felix was just exulting over the defeat of the Egyptian false prophet, who is referred to ch. 21:38—when Paul was arrested as though he might be the same.

3. *We accept it*—we recognize it with gratitude, not only now, in thy presence, but *always and in all places*. Felix, however, was hated by the Jews, even so that they sent an accusation to Rome against him. ¶ *Most noble.* The same title that is applied to him by Lysias, as we say "your excellency," &c.—a title of the office.

4. *Notwithstanding*—rather, *but that I*

*may not hinder thee more*, (than is necessary,) as though he would speak further of the virtues of Felix, only that he might intrude upon the public business. ¶ *Heard us*—his clients—the Jews, whose cause he was pleading. ¶ *Of thy clemency.* In accordance with thy well known fairness and impartiality—a few words—lit., *concisely*.

5. His first point is, that Paul has been found to be (1) *A wicked and dangerous man—a pestilent fellow* (*λοιμος*,) —a *plague*—a term common in harangues of the time to express a monster of wickedness and corruption—"man of Belial." (1 Sam. 25:25. Greek.) (2) *A mover of sedition*, by exciting disturbance among them—one *stirring insurrection among all the Jews*—throughout the world—in all the Roman empire. This point was skillfully made, as it would be worthy of legal notice and action. So, as a last resort, the Jews charged our Lord before Pilate of being dangerous to the throne of Cæsar. (3) *And a ringleader*—a term applied to soldiers in the front rank of an army—a *foremost man—of the sect* (heresy, vs. 14,) *of the Nazarenes*—the followers of Jesus of Nazareth, so called in contempt among the Jews, and known by this name now at Jerusalem—as they had the name of "Christians" among the Gentiles at Antioch, &c., ch. 11:26. They seem to have early had a separate synagogue of the Nazarenes. The name nowhere else occurs in the New Testament. After the Apostolic history, it was a name taken by a class of Judaizing Christians. The word originally



¶ ch. 21: 28.  
• John 18: 31.

6 <sup>a</sup> Who also hath gone about to profane the temple :  
whom we took, and would • have judged according to our  
law.

¶ ch. 21: 33.

7 <sup>r</sup> But the chief captain Lysias came *upon us*, and with  
great violence took *him* away out of our hands,

¶ ch. 23: 30.

8 <sup>s</sup> Commanding his accusers to come unto thee : by  
examining of whom thyself mayest take knowledge of all  
these things, whereof we accuse him.

9 And the Jews also assented, saying that these things were so.

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to

is from a Hebrew term signifying *Branch*, the name by which Christ should be called, and which followed Him to the cross. Tertullus strove to excite the governor's prejudice against Paul as a leader of a low class of people.

6. Here is another charge, (4) That he had *gone about*—literally, *attempted*—endeavored—to *profane the temple*, ch. 21: 28. This would be recognized by a Roman governor as a capital offense. ¶ *Whom we took—seized—laid hold upon*, (but with a seditious force, ch. 21: 17, 30,) and *would have judged (wished to judge) according to our law*. He pretends that they desired to try him according to their (Jewish) law, as the Roman government commonly allowed them to do, (John 18: 31,) and only on such charges as their laws recognized. But the fact is, that they were seeking only to put him to death, without form of law, and were actually beating him when he was snatched out of their hands, ch. 21: 31.

7. *But*. "Tertullus as impudently slanders Paul, and accuses Lysias, as he had flattered Felix." ¶ *With great violence*—literally, *with much force*. This is false, for the Jews made no struggle when Lysias appeared. The speech is skillfully worded so as to make a false impression upon the governor, complaining that Lysias violently interfered with the lawful procedure of the Jews, when he interposed to save Paul's life till the facts should be known, ch. 21: 31, &c. They had power, it would seem, to put a stranger to death who profaned their temple, (John 18: 31,) and to

scourge Jewish criminals. Matt. 10: 17; Acts 5: 48; 2 Cor. 11: 24.

8. *Commanding*, &c. This was the truth, and this was the plain duty of the chief captain in every serious case. And yet Tertullus seems to refer to it by way of complaint, as though they could have dispatched the business, and should have been left to do so, without putting both them and the governor to the trouble of transfer to Cæsarea. (This clause, with vs. 7 and latter clause of vs. 6, is omitted in some recent editions.) ¶ *Of whom*. If the preceding passage be left out, this would refer to Paul, though it seems scarcely probable that the speaker would think of Paul's being put to the torture for examination, as was unlawful in case of a Roman citizen. It is most natural to refer it to Lysias; and the governor seems so to have understood it, inasmuch as he actually postponed the case till Lysias should come, see vs. 22.

9. *Assented*. They indorsed the charges—"confirmed this speech of their heathen mouthpiece." The same word is used of the Jews' conspiracy, ch. 23: 20, and of their conspiracy with Judas in the case of our Lord, Luke 22: 5; also John 9: 12, where it is rendered "*covenanted*" and "*agreed*." Some read the Greek text differently here, and adopt a word meaning they *joined in assailing him*.

10. *Then Paul answered, the governor having nodded to him to speak*. Here Paul begins this *Third Defense*. Now he is to plead his cause in quick succession before three very different and representative characters. This Felix

speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem <sup>a</sup> for to <sup>b</sup> worship. <sup>a</sup> vs. 17.  
<sup>b</sup> ch. 21: 26.

12 <sup>c</sup> And they neither found me in the temple disputing <sup>d</sup> with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city. <sup>c</sup> ch. 25: 8, and  
<sup>d</sup> 28: 17.

is the sensualist, who, of course, has no sympathy with Paul's doctrines. Festus is the crafty politician who cares for no such kingdom but that which is meat and drink. And Agrippa is the polite formalist, and official guardian of religion. But though in various attitudes of unbelief, they unite in rejecting the Gospel of Christ. ¶ *I know.* Paul confines himself to the known facts, and refers not to Felix's character, but to his term of administration, *since (from) many years*—from six to ten years; and, therefore, well versed in Jewish affairs. This was at such a turbulent period a comparatively long administration, and gave proof of some talent. ¶ *A judge.* The governor had the power of life or death. ¶ *The more cheerfully*—hopefully—with more confidence in the result. ¶ *Answer — defend* (make defense,) *the things concerning myself.* Paul has confidence, as he intimates, on two grounds. (1) The experience of Felix in the government. (2) The shortness of his own stay in Jerusalem, so that his conduct for that brief period could be readily sifted, and during so short a time—only five or six days until he was arrested—it was impossible for him to stir up any sedition, as was charged. (See vs. 1, and notes.)

11. *Because*—literally, *thou being able to know*—and this is mentioned as another ground of the Apostle's confidence, that Felix would readily know that Paul had arrived at Jerusalem only twelve days before, (see vs. 1, notes,) which Lewin thinks must refer to the day of Pentecost, since Felix, however great his experience, could have had no means of knowing when

Paul actually arrived, but only on what day was the feast. But he could ascertain on inquiry when Paul arrived. ¶ *For to worship.* He gives three reasons for his coming to Jerusalem, (1) to keep the feast; (2) to bring alms, vs. 17; (3) to make oblations. One who went up to Jerusalem to worship in the temple, would scarcely have been found profaning it. Though he had abandoned Judaism as “a law of commandments contained in ordinances,” he had the true, spiritual idea of that ancient system, and as such he honored it, and could worship in the use of those observances. He could keep the Pentecost as a Christian Pentecost, just as he could keep the Jewish Sabbath in the spirit of the new economy. So far was he from profaning the temple and the religion of his fathers, that he came up hither to worship. He stoutly opposed any compulsory keeping of the Jewish ritual, (Gal. 4: 9–11; Col. 2: 16,) but he also claimed the Christian freedom to keep the feasts or not, (Rom. 14: 6,) if only in their high spiritual use, as they were always intended by God, and always kept by the true Israel.

12. Paul now vindicates himself as to his conduct, during this brief time. He challenges any proof of his attempting to raise a tumult, as charged in vs. 5. He was not found even discussing questions in the temple, as he might lawfully have done, but quietly worshipping there, *nor making an insurrection of the people*, (the mob,) as was charged—*neither in the synagogues, nor through the city*, (in the streets.) The time was too brief for this, if he had chosen to attempt it, and they had

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

<sup>k</sup> See Amos 8: 14.  
ch. 9: 2.  
2 Tim. 1: 3.  
<sup>m</sup> ch. 26: 22, and 28: 23.

<sup>n</sup> ch. 13: 6, and 26: 6, 7, and 28: 20.  
<sup>o</sup> Dan. 12: 2.  
John 5: 28, 29.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after <sup>k</sup> the way which they call heresy, so worship I the <sup>l</sup> God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in <sup>m</sup> the law and in the prophets:

15 And <sup>n</sup> have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, <sup>o</sup> that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

not found him so doing. Thus he disproves their charge, vs. 5, that he was a (λοῦπός) pest, and seditious fellow.

13. Now he more formally and positively adds to his denial the open challenge, and calls for *proof*. ¶ *Prove*—literally, *neither are they able to present me*, (technical term still used in courts, to find a bill or presentment against me,) concerning the things of which they accuse me.

14. *But*. He proceeds now to answer their second charge—that besides being a public nuisance and a dangerous, mischief-making man, he was a ringleader of this low, vile “sect” of the Nazarenes. This he admits and vindicates—so far, at least, as belonging to them is concerned. ¶ *This I confess to thee*—concealing nothing that is true in the accusation—that after (according to) the way (called also “*this way*,” ch. 22: 4; “*that way*,” ch. 19: 9, 23, meaning the Christian way of belief, worship, &c.) which they call (αἵρεσις) a sect, (schism, the same term as is used in their charge, vs. 5, “sect of the Nazarenes,” so also ch. 26: 5,) so worship I (according to this way and sect, as they charge,) the God of my fathers, (not by any means introducing any strange God as they alleged, nor deserting the God and religion of my fathers, but on the contrary,) believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets. He claims that he is so far from being a heretic or schismatic, that he adheres faithfully to the worship of his fathers’ God, and receives in full faith all the Old Testament Scriptures. He claims that he has taken the true spiritual idea of the Old Testament doctrine and worship, as it was given

by God—and that the New Testament system is the substance of which the Old Testament was but the shadow. This was the position taken by Stephen, ch. 7. This was a fit plea before Felix, as the Roman law allowed all men to worship the gods of their own nation.

15. *And have hope toward (unto) God*. This he refers to in his defense before the Sanhedrim, ch. 23: 6. He claims that he not only worships the same God and receives the same sacred Scriptures, but that he entertains the same hope as they—“the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers.” (ch. 26: 6–8,) the hope of a risen Messiah which, as he contended, was the vital doctrine of Christianity, and for which, therefore, he was brought to trial—“the hope and resurrection of the dead,” (ch. 23: 6; 28: 20,) as it was illustrated and proved in the case of Jesus Christ, ch. 4: 2, notes,) and which was held by “the strictest sect of their religion,” the Pharisees, of which he was one, by birth and life, (ch. 23: 6; 26: 5.) The national hope of a Messiah did, therefore, involve the “hope of a general resurrection,” because Jesus had been proved to be the Messiah whom they hoped for, by His resurrection, and that resurrection too was the pledge and proof of the general resurrection. Thus is realized the hope of a Restorer, a Redeemer from death; and thus we are begotten again unto a lively hope by His resurrection, (1 Pet. 1: 3.) Therefore this was the vital fact of Christianity, which the Apostles were raised up to bear witness of; and since a majority of the nation (the Pharisees,) admitted the

16 And <sup>p</sup>herein do I exercise myself, to have always a <sup>p</sup>ch. 15:1.  
conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17 Now after many years <sup>a</sup>I came to bring alms to my <sup>q</sup>ch. 11:29, 30,  
nation, and offerings. <sup>and 20:16;</sup>  
<sup>Rom. 15:25.</sup>

18 <sup>r</sup>Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me puri- <sup>2 Cor. 8:4.</sup>  
fied in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult. <sup>Gal. 2:10.</sup>  
<sup>r</sup>ch. 21:26, 27,  
<sup>and 26:12.</sup>

doctrine of a resurrection, they could not reasonably reject it as instanced in the fact of Christ rising from the dead. Properly understood, the Mosaic system taught the doctrine of a resurrection in the great idea of a Messiah suffering to death, yet living and conquering—shedding His blood and officiating to present it before God—as Paul shows in his Epistle to the Hebrews, (9: 24–28 and 10: 12,) on the basis of which the faithful of Old Testament times looked for a Canaan above, (ch. 11,) into which Christ as the true Joshua should lead His people—“the rest (keeping of Sabbaths) that remaineth for the people of God,” ch. 4: 1–9. This resurrection is of the dead, (bodies,) both of the just and unjust—not, as some did then and since allege, confined to the just—nor so as to allow the idea of any annihilation of the wicked, but including the resurrection of both, which involves, also, a state of retribution.

16. *Herein*. In this, including the aforesaid confession—*do I strive*—the term is used of habitual practice, such as training the body by gymnastic exercises. (Some editions add *kat, also—I, as well as they*.) ¶ *Strive*—a term peculiarly appropriate in allusion to the athletic exercises at the Grecian games, as 1 Cor. 9: 27—*A blameless conscience to have toward God and toward men, always*—as he says, ch. 23: 1, “I have lived in all good conscience toward God until this day”—that is, *HEREIN*—conscientious in this profession of his fathers’ hope and covenants, acting up to this adherence, with the earnest, constant aim to maintain a good conscience in regard to the religion of his fathers.

17, 18. *After*—lit., in the course of further years. Here he goes back again to the charge in vs. 6, that he had profaned the temple; and in order to

narrate the circumstances of his unjust arrest—that whereas, as he had just declared, he was not found discussing questions in the temple, so he was found purified in the temple, neither with multitude nor with tumult. ¶ *After many years*—lit., more years—(several)—the interval between his visits to Jerusalem. The previous visit, A. D. 54, had been four or five years before, (ch. 18: 22.) It was now A. D. 59, and so he had been these years absent. This absence, however, had been not from disregard to his nation, but the contrary. He had been on a (missionary and) collecting tour for his people, and as the result of this he came again, after such an absence, to Jerusalem, with the alms which he had raised. ¶ *I came to bring*—lit., I was present, about to make. Luke makes no mention of these collections in this history. But the epistles which Paul wrote to the different Churches during the time covered by Luke’s history make frequent and particular mention of these contributions from the Christians in Macedonia and Achaia. Rom 15: 25, &c.; 1 Cor. 16: 3, 4; 2 Cor. chs. 8, 9; 20: 4. Even before their great missionary commission from the Church at Antioch, Paul and Barnabas were charged by them with alms for the poor saints at Jerusalem. James, Peter, and John, “the pillars” at Jerusalem, charged them not to forget the same charitable collections, as they gave them the right hand of fellowship to go to the heathen. Gal. 2: 10. Here, by the way, his relation to the Gentiles was justified, as not implying any alienation from his own people, for he was all the while caring for them. ¶ *And offerings*. The term implies ritual offerings in the temple, and the reference is to the expenses which he undertook for the Nazarites,

<sup>a</sup> ch. 23 : 30, and  
25 : 16.

19 • Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had aught against me.

20 Or else let these same *here* say, if they have found any evil-doing in me, while I stood before the council,

<sup>c</sup> ch. 23 : 6, and  
25 : 20.

21 Except it be for this one voice that I cried standing among them, • Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

at the suggestion of the brethren in Jerusalem, (ch. 21 : 23, 26.) This he did for the very purpose of obviating any such charge of deserting the religion of his fathers. It is supposed by some that he bore these expenses out of the funds collected for poor Jews in Jerusalem, as these were indeed of the number, and were recommended to him by the brethren there for this very service. Therefore these contributions which he presented showed his love for his nation, and his interest in the temple, and would disprove the charge of profaning the temple and stirring up seditions among the people. ¶ *Where-upon*—rather, *In which*—in the performance of which aims and offerings, *certain Jews from Asia*—foreign Ephesian Jews, (ch. 21 : 27.) This clause is emphatic—as much as to say strangers and private men, known only as Asiatic Jews—not officers nor those who are here, but persons who are absent, vs. 19, *found me in the temple*—nor disputing, nor raising an insurrection of the people, as was charged, (see vs. 12,) but *purified in the temple*—undergoing the rites of purification, which belonged to his engagements there with the Nazarites. He was arrested, therefore, in the very act of performing the rites of the temple—was even charged with profaning the temple, and deserting his fathers' religion while he was actually engaged in the temple service—and so far from raising insurrection among the people, was thus worshiping *neither with multitude nor with tumult*.

19. *Who ought*—rather, *who must*. As the Roman law required that in every trial the prisoner should have his accusers face to face, it was necessary that his accusers should have been present as witnesses against him if he

was to be fairly tried. But they had not been brought. The Sanhedrim were aware that if they were examined, it would appear that not Paul, but these men, originated the disturbance. ¶ *Object*—literally, *accuse*. The law required them to be present as his accusers.

20. *Or*—waiving this legal requirement—*let these themselves*—who are here present, and have undertaken the prosecution—Ananias and the elders—as much as to say, “I challenge even these who are fiercely persecuting me, and who appear here against me, instead of the lawful witnesses”—*if they found any* (or, what) *wrong in me, standing* (as I stood) *before the council*. They would readily remember that Lysias declared in his favor, that “when he brought him forth into their council, he perceived that nothing worthy of death or of bonds had been laid to his charge,” ch. 23 : 28, 29. ¶ *Evil doing*. This term is rendered “*matter of wrong*,” ch. 18 : 14, and refers to a legal offense. No charge had been formally made, much less proved, before their own court.

21. *Except (other than) concerning this one voice* (φωνῆς) (expression) *which I cried, standing* (as I stood) *among them*—the Sanhedrim—*touching* (concerning) *the resurrection, &c.* This was the declaration of Paul before the Sanhedrim which raised the great excitement, compelling Lysias to interfere and rescue Paul out of their hands, ch. 23 : 6–8. And this it was that Lysias declared to be a question of their law, ch. 23 : 29, and Felix would doubtless regard it in the same light and as no “*evil doing*,” (ἀδικημα.) Here again he repeats before the Jewish leaders his profession of that vital doctrine which was illustrated in case of the

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of *that* way, he deferred them, and said, When *Lysias* the chief captain shall come down, I will know <sup>vs. 7.</sup> the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let *him* have liberty, and <sup>vs. 27: 3, and 28 16.</sup> that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

24 And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ.

Messiah, a foundation-fact of Christianity, at the same time proving Christ's Messiahship, and sealing Christianity as Divine; so that the whole Christian system was involved in this doctrine of the resurrection.

22. *And Felix having heard these things*, (when he should have at once given judgment in Paul's favor, as no witnesses were present against him,) *knowing more (very) accurately the things in regard to the way*, (viz. the Christian system, so far, at least, as concerned its relations to Judaism, yet as Paul had referred to what had passed before Lysias,) *he put them off*, not venturing to act in direct opposition to the Sanhedrim, like another Pilate. He was convinced of Paul's innocence, and *put them off*—a technical term, meaning he *deferred sentence*—as much as to say that they had failed to make out their case against Paul. Felix had been governor during six years, and Christianity was preached there at Cæsarea by Philip, was embraced by the centurion and others, and his own wife was a Jewess, so that he would naturally know much of the Christian system, in respect to Judaism. He resorted to the ignoble plan of postponing the case, and says to them, when Lysias the chief captain shall come down (from Jerusalem,) *I will adjudge your matters*—give a final decision. Whether Lysias came, or what means, if any, were taken to get his testimony, is not here mentioned by Luke; but as they had referred the governor to him (vs. 8,) he makes this a pretext for delay. Besides, we have afterwards some further insight into this postponement,

when we find that he hoped to receive from Paul a bribe, (vs. 26.)

23. *He commanded also the centurion*, (who had charge of him, ch. 23: 32,) *that Paul be kept* (in custody,) *and have indulgence*, (so far as would consist with safety.) He seems to have been in what was termed "military custody," in which case the prisoner was bound by a long, light chain to his left arm, the other end of which was fastened to the officer. ¶ *And that he should forbid*, &c. This was the kind of free indulgence he was to have, and not to be treated as a criminal, for his case was undecided, and the clear presumption was also in his favor. This allowance granted to him of seeing his friends, may have been connected with the hope of obtaining a bribe from them. ¶ *Of his friends*—literally, *of his own*, (people,) that is, the believers, (ch. 4: 23. See 10: 1, 24, 44,) and his fellow travelers and near friends, ch. 20: 4; 21: 12, &c. as Philip, Luke, &c. ¶ *To minister—wait upon him*—do him service, supply his wants, or *come unto him*—visit him. Thus Paul was able to propagate the Gospel.

24. *And after some (certain) days*, (not long,) *Felix having come*, (perhaps having lately arrived with this woman, or coming to the palace of Herod, where he was about to give audience to Paul,) ch. 23: 35, *with Drusilla his wife*. This Felix had been thrice married and to persons of royal birth, twice to one of the same name, one of whom was this *Jewess*, a daughter of Herod Agrippa the elder, ch. 12: 23, and sister to this Agrippa II. She was remarkable for her beauty, and had been betrothed at

25 And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.

six years of age to Epiphanes, son of Antiochus, who refused to become a Jew as he had contracted, and she was married to Azizus, king of the Emesenes. But Felix, by the aid of a magician, induced her to leave her husband, and took her to wife. She and her son perished in an eruption of Vesuvius, A. D. 79. The other Drusilla whom Felix married was a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. ¶ *Being a Jewess.* An affecting specimen of the Jewish degradation is here before the eyes of Paul. She is mentioned as if to account for the interview. It would seem as if Drusilla had expressed some interest in hearing this Jew, about whom there had been so much stir. ¶ *Sent for Paul*—to be brought from his confinement to the apartment where he was to hear him—and heard him. Paul embraced this opportunity to expound the Christian faith, and Felix heard him—perhaps invited him to explain the outlines of the Gospel system, which had provoked so much discussion. ¶ *In Christ.* The faith which had Christ for its object and basis, and which held to Jesus as the promised Messiah and the only foundation of hope, and pattern of conduct. This seems to have been a private hearing, not connected immediately with the trial. It was, doubtless, given him what to speak.

25. The free scope which Paul took in his discourse appears from the topics here noted. The preacher was fearless, and it was the governor who quailed before the prisoner of Christ. ¶ *And as he discoursed (of) concerning righteousness—(rectitude)—*directing his exposition of the Christian faith to these leading Christian virtues, and thus giving it a practical application. Felix is said by Tacitus to have considered that he might commit all crimes with impunity. This moment there sat by his side the subject and witness of his unblushing wickedness. ¶ *Temperance.* The term means self-command in all things—not in the single

sense of moderation in food and abstinence from intoxicating drink, but of self-mastery in all the passions, with the special sense of chastity; yet also including “drunkenness, revelings, and such like.” (Gal. 5: 21.) We know not how Paul discoursed on these topics. But we can readily see that any treatment of these items as among the high Christian virtues, must have come with overwhelming power upon this distinguished profligate. It would seem that Paul exposed the sins of which Felix was so notoriously guilty, not by personal and severe denunciation, but by a faithful exhibition of the Christian virtues, leaving the sensualist to see himself reversed in the bright mirror of the Christian faith. ¶ *Judgment to come*—literally, *the judgment that is about to be*—that shall so surpass all proud tribunals of men, and that shall judge all judges, and potentates, and that with most unerring rectitude, assigning to them their everlasting rewards. Paul brought forward this doctrine, also, in his exposition of the Christian faith at Athens, and was dismissed by them as he came to discourse upon the general resurrection, (ch. 17: 31.) This is a fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith. ¶ *Trembled*—lit., *becoming very fearful*. Nothing is said of Drusilla’s emotions, but Felix was deeply moved. ¶ *For this time*—literally, *as to the now*—for the present—depart. He merely dismissed Paul, neither taking personal offense at him—so reasonably and sincerely did the great preacher expound the truth—nor receiving the Gospel from him. He seems here to have arrested the discourse which we suppose had already set forth these virtues as the fruits of the Spirit, and which would have brought forward to the troubled conscience the free offers of salvation by Jesus Christ, the Saviour as well as the Judge, exalted to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins. ¶ *When*—literally, *but having found an oppor*

26 He hoped also that <sup>¶</sup> money should have been given <sup>¶ Ex. 23:8.</sup> him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him.

27 But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, <sup>¶ Ex. 23:7, ch. 12:3, and 25:9-14.</sup> willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

*tunity*—a favorable season—I will send for thee, back again. OBSERVE.—(1) “This very time should have been the convenient season”—*Bengel*. (2) He positively dismissed the subject for the present, but promised attention to it at some future favoring opportunity. (3) Though he often saw Paul afterwards, (vs. 26,) there is no evidence that he ever found a convenient season to attend to the Gospel.

26. *He hoped*—lit., at the same time also hoping. This is immediately connected with the foregoing verse, and opens to view what was really the strange conflict in the mind of this princely sensualist. While he was stirred to the very soul by the Apostle's discourse, so as to bid him begone, he promised to recall him, and he was at the same time hoping that money (pl. moneys) would have been given him. This was strictly forbidden by the Julian law of the Romans, (Digl. 47:11, 7,) yet it was practiced, and became the habit in the time of Festus' successor, Albinus, so that no criminals remained in prison under him except such as offered no sufficient bribes. (Jos. B. J. ii. 14, 1.) Paul, however, offered no such consideration—and his example in this respect was pleaded by Tertullian with those Christians who sought to purchase escape from persecution in the third century. Felix may have had an eye to the funds which Paul alludes to, vs. 17; and he had also influential friends at Cesarea, who might have been thought likely to contribute for his release. NOTE.—(1) Felix, like Judas, was impelled by the lowest avarice to resist all his convictions of right. (2) How one may carry on his cherished crimes while deep conviction of sin is struggling in his bosom. (3) It is not conviction that is saving, but Christ, to whom it ought to lead.

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¶ *Wherefore*. Felix sent for Paul often after this, but moved by the hope of sordid gain and not by the hope of salvation, he cared not to inquire further into the hope. He even sent for the minister of Christ who had preached righteousness to the oppressor, chastity to the adulterer, and a coming judgment to the unjust judge, and sent for him the more frequently, (on this account,) and communed with him—talked with him in free, familiar intercourse—carrying on his deceit and putting himself even under the sound of the Gospel which Paul must have preached to him, in the base hope of getting a wicked bribe. So deep is the depravity of the heart. Felix “sent for Paul” as if he had “a convenient season,” and according to the promise he had made. And probably he gave Paul to understand that he would willingly hear him further. But he seemed never to have found room for the Gospel in his heart, nor any opportunity any better than the first for giving earnest attention to the truth of God. “Thus the wretched Felix neglected to secure the treasure of the Gospel.”—*Bengel*.

27. *After two years*—literally, a period of two years having been fulfilled, since Paul's imprisonment at Cesarea—Felix received (from Nero) a successor, Porcius Festus. It appears most probable, according to the latest researches of Wieseler, Winer, &c., that this change took place A. D. 60. This was a trying dispensation to Paul, keeping him from going forward to his missionary work; yet, as he was not kept in close confinement, he was able doubtless to superintend the Churches by correspondence and oral messages, as he did during his imprisonment at Rome. And thus it was wisely ordered that important work should first be done for the greater establishment of



## CHAPTER XXV.

1 NOW when Festus was come into the province, after three days he ascended from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.

¶ ch. 24: 1.  
vs. 15.

2 \*Then the high priest and the chief of the Jews informed him against Paul, and besought him,

the Churches in Asia Minor and Greece, before he should go to Rome. The reason given for the conduct of Felix, in so unrighteously keeping him in custody when nothing could be proved against him, is that he was *willing to lay up favors with the Jews*, and therefore *left Paul bound*. Light is thrown upon this brief record by the fact that the Jews were much exasperated at his avarice and cruelty, (he having lately ordered a massacre of the Jews in the streets of Cæsarea,) and they were making complaints of him at Rome; and he hoped by this measure toward Paul to curry favor with them, so as to gain them over to his interest. He did not succeed in this wicked scheme. His accusers followed him to Rome, and he escaped condemnation only through the intercession of his brother Pallas, who was a friend of Nero, but who was afterwards put to death by that bloody emperor, "for that he held a vast treasure in a long old age."—*Tacit. Ann. L. 14*. Thus the lust of gain in Nero led to the death of Felix's brother and advocate, and perhaps also of Felix himself, as the lust of gain had led to Paul's unjust confinement. We remember also, that it was to show the Jews a pleasure that Pilate delivered the Lord Jesus into the hands of the Jews. Felix does not give Paul over to death, because "the lion can go no further than the chain." Paul has not yet to die, but he has yet to suffer for Christ's sake, as he was forewarned at the beginning.

## CHAPTER XXV.

§ 37. PAUL'S FOURTH DEFENSE—VIZ. BEFORE FESTUS, AND ACCUSED BY THE SANHEDRIM. *Cæsarea*. A. D. 60. Ch. 25: 1.

The Apostle—a prisoner for Christ—has now been two long years unjustly

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deprived of his liberty; and as if to prove in his case the persistent hatred and bitterness of the Jewish people, he is now to hear the same charges repeated against him, with all the fresh malice of the first accusation. This new governor died in about two years. He was active and efficient in suppressing insurrections, and bore a good character for a mild and just administration, quite superior to that of Felix. But he was a crafty politician, vs. 19, vacillating, like Pilate, between the requirements of the Roman law and the demands of the Jews.

1. *Festus then having come to the province*. Judea was not, strictly speaking, a province of itself, but was attached to the province of Syria as a procuratorship. Yet it was also called a province, as the governor was, practically, almost independent of Syria. See vs. 13. ¶ *After three days*. Festus at once pays the Jews the courtesy to go up to Jerusalem, the capital, and of course his first business is to have an interview with the high priest.

2, 3. This arrival of Festus, the new governor, at Jerusalem, was improved by the leaders of the Jews for nothing so much as to urge forward their malicious accusation against Paul, vs. 15. The high priest was not now *that Ananias* whom Paul had rebuked, (ch. 23: 3,) but one named Ismael, son of Fabi, who had been put forward by Agrippa, while Ananias retained much influence and authority until his death. In vs. 15 Festus speaks of the accusers as "chief priests and elders," here spoken of as *the chief* (men) *of the Jews, who informed* (tabled charges, as ch. 24: 1,) *against Paul, and besought him*. The term denotes *calling to one's aid*—then to *beseech*, and the tense of the verb implies that it was done with importunity. And not only this, but they *desired* (for themselves) *favor against*

3 And desired favour against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem, <sup>b</sup> laying wait in the way to kill him. <sup>b</sup> ch. 23: 12-15.

4 But Festus answered, that Paul should be kept at Cesarea, and that he himself would depart shortly *thither*.

5 Let them therefore, said he, which among you are able, go down with *me*, and accuse this man, <sup>c</sup> if there be any wickedness in him. <sup>c</sup> ch. 18: 14. vs. 18.

6 And when he had tarried among them || more than ten days, he went down unto Cesarea; and the next day sitting on the judgment seat commanded Paul to be brought. <sup>d</sup> Or, as some copies read, *no more than eight or ten days*.

*him*—made interest and solicited this as a special favor to them—that *he would* (at once while he was there) *send for him to Jerusalem, they making an ambush to kill him by the way*. They were even arranging all the plans for the ambush, or “lying in wait” of assassins, which they had failed in before, ch. 23: 16. Festus knew nothing of this, at first, as we suppose, but Luke knew of it. We find from vs. 15 that they first of all applied to him to have a verdict given against Paul, without further trial. This was directly in the face of the Jewish law as well as of the Roman, and serves to show the corruption and degradation which the people had reached.

4. *But Festus answered that Paul is kept* (in custody) *at Cesarea* (not “*should be kept*,”) *and that he himself would shortly depart* (thither.) He stated the fact well known to them, that Paul was at Cesarea, in custody for trial, and he made his own speedy return thither a reason for not complying with their demand. Thus understood, this reply of his has not the haughty tone and positive air given by our version, and falls in more with the smooth, conciliatory tact of Festus. He may have meant them to understand that Paul was in safe keeping there, and would not escape; and was there, whither, as they knew, he had already been sent by the chief captain, according to law, for the governor’s decision.

5. He proposes to them, therefore, to have Paul’s accusers go down with himself, and proceed to the trial. In vs. 16 he tells Agrippa that he insisted on the requirement of the Roman law

to this effect. It would appear, however, that though this may have been in mind, he spoke to the Jews in quite a different tone. ¶ *Able*. This term, which commonly means “able,” may here mean *empowered*, authorized, *delegated* for the purpose; or it may mean, more generally, *leading men*—the most distinguished members of the supreme council. See vs. 2. It does not mean such as were *able* to go down, for it was not a matter of convenience or option, as it was required by law. Lit., *The chief men among you, he says, going down together, if there is any thing in (the case of) this man, let them accuse him*—some understand, “those competent to undertake the task of accusers.” The word for “wickedness” is only implied, and not found in the original.

6. *More than ten days*. The margin reads, *not more than eight or ten days*; which is judged by latest critics to be the true reading. And as this was the whole time of Festus’ stay in Jerusalem, he “*returned shortly*,” as he said vs. 4. According to the received text, it would seem to be meant that he did not return “shortly,” as he promised. ¶ *The next day*. Lit., *Going down to Cesarea, on the morrow*. ¶ *Sitting upon the judgment seat, he ordered Paul to be brought* (into court.) The promptness of this proceeding was required by the promise he had given to the Jews, who seem to have gone down with him, vs. 5. Festus, on the one hand, was bound to execute the law in case of a Roman citizen; and on the other hand he had the Jews to conciliate, who were evidently so much embittered against the prisoner, and who might foment fresh

<sup>d</sup> Mark 15: 3.  
<sup>e</sup> Luke 23: 7-10.  
<sup>f</sup> ch. 24: 5-13.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 6: 13, and  
 24: 12, and 28:  
 17.

<sup>h</sup> ch. 24: 27.

<sup>i</sup> vs. 20

7 And when he was come, the Jews which came down from Jerusalem stood round about, <sup>d</sup>and laid many and grievous complaints against Paul, which they could not prove.

8 While he answered for himself, <sup>e</sup>Neither against the law of the Jews, neither against the temple, nor yet against Cæsar, have I offended any thing at all.

9 But Festus, <sup>f</sup>willing to do the Jews a pleasure, answered Paul, and said, <sup>g</sup>Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

disturbances to unsettle or perplex his administration.

7. *And when he (Paul) was come, (from the prison to the judgment hall,) the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem (to Cesarea) stood round about, (Paul) bringing many and grave charges against Paul, which they were not able to prove.* They seem to have had no orator or advocate (as Tertullus) at this time. The charges were the same as before Felix—viz. *Heresy*, in being a Nazarene and preventing others from keeping the law, (ch. 24: 5, 6, 12;) *profanation* of the temple, and *treason*. See vs. 8. This last may have been a misrepresentation of his doctrine about obedience to Christ, (vs. 19,) as was alleged by the Jews also in case of Christ before Pilate, John 19: 12. And their success with Pilate in this political charge when all others failed, may have led them to resort to the same in case of Paul. Or it may have been the charge of turbulence and sedition, stirring up the people and breaking the peace in violation of the laws of Cæsar. See ch. 17: 7; 18: 13.

8. Each of these charges was recognized by the Roman law, but as presented by the accusers they were frivolous, and amounted to nothing at utmost but to matters of doctrine about the resurrection of Jesus, which were not cognizable by the Roman law, as Festus decided, vs. 19. Paul, moreover, made out his defense most triumphantly—taking the charges one by one, and denying each and all of them.

9. This triumphant vindication of Paul ought to have settled the case.

But “the Jews spake against it,” as Paul himself tells us, (ch. 28,) and Festus was swayed by their clamor to vacillate, as Pilate was. They claimed that as he was charged with offenses recognized by their law, he ought to be tried by their tribunal, (the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem,) and perhaps cited the edict of Julius Cæsar, “If at any time thereafter there should arise any question touching the Jewish law, the matter should be tried before Hyrcanus and his heirs,” that is, before the high priest, for the time, and the Sanhedrim.—*Jos. Ant.* xiv. 10, 2. ¶ *But Festus, says Luke, willing to do the Jews a pleasure*—the same phrase is used of Felix, (except “favor” instead of “favors” in the Greek)—showing that Felix, on entering the province, was as anxious to curry favor with the Jews as Felix had been on quitting it, ch. 24: 27. His vacillation would likely have ended as Pilate’s did, had not Paul appealed to Cæsar. Festus himself accounts for his proposition to Paul on other grounds, vs. 20, viz. “that it was because he doubted of such manner of questions.” ¶ *Answered Paul.* This was no proper answer to his complete vindication, (vs. 10,) considering what Festus admits, that Paul’s innocence was established, vs. 18, 25. ¶ *Wilt thou.* Festus, who declined sending for Paul to Jerusalem while he was there, now proposes to him (in order to curry favor with the Jews—and basely, as Paul’s reply shows,) to go up to Jerusalem and there be judged before him by the Sanhedrim, virtually surrendering him to the Jews. But this could not be

10 Then said Paul, I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou very well knowest.

11 <sup>a</sup> For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing <sup>a vs. 25.</sup> worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none <sup>ch. 13:14, and 23:29, and 26:31.</sup> of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. <sup>i ch. 26:32, and 28:19.</sup> <sup>1</sup> I appeal unto Cæsar.

done without the prisoner's consent. The governor held a court of justice at Jerusalem as well as at Cesarea, (Matt. 27:2,) and as the offense had occurred there he might have insisted on the trial being transferred thither before his own court, had not Paul appealed unto Cæsar. As Paul had already been tried, formally, before Festus, and no charges proved, this was a shameful proposal to put him to another trial, (before his accusers as the judges, vs. 11,) even though nominally before Festus, or subject to his decision. This reminds us of Pilate. "And the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed, and Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required." Luke 23:23, 24. m

10. Lit., *Before the tribunal of Cæsar I am standing, where it is necessary that I be judged.* To this politic proposition of Festus, Paul replies as one who knows his civil rights and will maintain them where such an important issue is at stake. If Paul had now been crushed, how sadly must the progress of Christ's cause have been checked. But the Apostle is emboldened and cheered by the promise of his Master, that in all these conflicts with the Jews he should not suffer to death, and that he should testify for Him at Rome also, (ch. 23:11.) Therefore Paul now claims the right of a Roman citizen; insisting that instead of being given over to the Sanhedrim to be judged by his accusers, he is now before the proper court, according to the law. OBSERVE.—(1) He had been sent up from Jerusalem to Cesarea by the Roman Tribune, because it was the proper court for his trial on a political charge. He was a Roman citizen; and this court of the governor was the emperor's court for that province. And

(2) the charges had been duly preferred against him, and Festus knew full well that no wrong had been proven against him—lit., *The Jews I have wronged* (in) *nothing, as also thou knowest very well—or, too well,* (to have made such a proposal,) or, *better* than most people—or, *better* than thou wilt confess—or, (probably) *better* than before the trial. *Comp.* ch. 24:22. And so Festus confesses, vs. 18. The great political point in question was, whether the preaching of Christ was opposed to the laws of the empire, vs. 19.

11. *For if I am in the wrong,* (same term as vs. 10,) as I deny—or, *have done something worthy of death, I do not beg off from dying.* He does not shun investigation. He is willing to stand upon his innocence. If any capital offense can be proved against him he is ready to suffer death. He thus demands of Festus to stand upon the result of the trial, as much as to say, What has been proved against me worthy of death, as the Jews have alleged (vs. 24.) Festus admits to Agrippa that he *found* (upon trial,) that Paul had committed nothing worthy of death, vs. 25. ¶ *But if there is nothing of the things whereof they accuse me—if there is nothing in them, (as we say,) if they turn out to be nothing, or nothing of them is made out—no man is able* (has legal right or power,) *to give me over as a favor, to them.* See vs. 9. The term rendered "*deliver*" is very expressive, and means to *make a present of—to hand over as a gratuity.* Festus represents it otherwise to Agrippa, vs. 20. This language of Paul indicates that he regarded the proposal of Festus as a gross and outrageous violation of his rights, the same as though he had, like Pilate in the case of our Lord, "given order that it

12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

13 And after certain days king Agrippa and Bernice came unto Cesarea to salute Festus.

should be as they desired," and "delivered him to their will." Paul, knowing that this was a shameful truckling to the demands of his persecutors which must certainly issue in his being sacrificed to their rage, stands upon his rights and says, "*I appeal unto Cæsar.*" This right of appeal belonged to every Roman citizen. Anciently, under the commonwealth, it was an appeal to the people from capital sentence, except, perhaps, in certain prescribed cases. When, afterwards, the supreme power vested in the emperor, the appeal was shifted also from the people to the emperor. It would seem that the governor retained some discretionary power, and that the law restricted somewhat the right of appeal; so that, in extreme cases, it might be denied. *Dig. 49 : 5, 7.* Accordingly the governor consults with the council, vs. 12. *Pliny*, the consul, in his famous letter to the Emperor Trajan in regard to the wonderful spread of Christianity in his province of Bithynia, says: "There were others possessed of the like madness, whom, because they were Roman citizens, I ordered to be sent back into the city." Thus the Apostle and representative of Christianity—persecuted by the Jews as his Master had been, and threatened by them with death if he could only be gotten in their power—finds his only refuge in the heathen power which claimed to be the Mistress of the world. His Roman citizenship, however he derived it through his ancestors, lay in the plan of God by which he should testify for Christ at the world's metropolis. And now, in this appeal, he speaks doubtless under the Divine inspiration promised to the Apostles in all such circumstances, and "not so much caring for himself as for the Church." Thus, in a way most unexpected to him, was the Apostle to have the privilege of preaching Christ at

Rome also. See ch. 23 : 11. Who can doubt that the prayers of the Gentile Churches which Paul had planted were going up to God for him, (as of the Church at Jerusalem for Peter in prison, ch. 12 : 5,) and thus the power of prayer among the Gentiles enters as a new power in the history of the world. Thus while Paul is betrayed by the Jews into the hands of the Gentiles, as Agabus had prophesied, (ch. 21 : 11,) it turns out to be not for his more swift destruction, but rather "for the furtherance of the Gospel." (Phil. 1 : 12-25.)

12. The Roman governors had a bench of "assessors," whose office was *advisory*, and not judicial, and whose business it was to assist them in their decisions. ¶ *Festus, therefore, having conferred with the council* upon the new aspect now put upon the case by this formal appeal, is taken by surprise, and answers in something of a fretted tone. Yet, as the appeal was clearly valid, he could not refuse it; and thus as the unconscious instrument of the Divine and wonder-working providence, he answers, "*Unto Cæsar shalt thou go.*" This Cæsar was the Emperor NERO! What Paul had desired, (ch. 19 : 21,) and what Christ had promised, was at length to be realized, (ch. 23 : 11.)

13. When an appeal was taken and allowed, no further process could be had by the magistrate. Yet Festus was perplexed, because he had scarcely gathered material enough from the trial to make up even a letter to the emperor, vs. 27. Before the Apostle shall appear at the tribunal of the heathen monarch of the world, he is to appear providentially before the so-called king of his own people, the last king of his house, but not like his father, king of Judea. ¶ *After certain days*—literally, *some days being past.* This "*Agrippa the king,*" (not of Ja-

14 And when they had been there many days, Festus declared Paul's cause unto the king, saying, <sup>\* ch. 24: 21</sup> There is a certain man left in bonds by Felix:

15 <sup>† vs. 2, 3.</sup> About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief

dea, but of the confines,) was the young Herod Agrippa II., son of that Agrippa I., king of Judea, who is uniformly called "Herod," by Luke; and who, as the bloody persecutor of the Christians, was awfully smitten with death, (see ch. 12.) He was now residing at Cesarea Philippi, his capital, with his sister Bernice, aged thirty. At his father's death he was but seventeen years old, and was residing at Rome, a favorite of the Emperor Claudius. Instead of succeeding in his youth to his father's kingdom, he was appointed by Claudius to the kingdom of Chalcis in Syria, vacated by the death of his uncle, the husband of Bernice, and Judea was again appended to Syria as a province. Four years afterwards he was made by Claudius, king of his grand-uncle Philip's tetrarchy, in Batanea, Gaulanitis, &c., (Luke 3: 1,) and also that of Lysanias. He was also invested with power over the temple at Jerusalem, and the holy treasury, and with the right of choosing the high priest when he was only twenty-three years old. To this kingdom Nero added certain cities of Galilee, besides fourteen villages and one city in Perea. He lived through the Jewish war, and died A. D. 100, in the third year of Trajan, and in the fifty-first year of his reign, aged about seventy. He was a zealous Jew, ostentatious, and like all the Herods, sensual; while he offended the Jews by so constructing his palace as to overlook the court of the temple, and by his capricious changes in the high priesthood. But like all the Herods, he was eager to pay court to the Roman government, and hence as soon as he heard of Festus' arrival at Cesarea, he hastened to salute him. ¶ Bernice was the sister of this Herod Agrippa the younger, and widow of his uncle, the king of Chalcis, whom Herod succeeded. She was a notoriously dissolute woman. "This Bernice came to Je-

rusalem, on one occasion, barefooted, and with her head shaven, to pay her vow to God for her safety."—*Juvenal, Sat. 20.* Such abandoned kings as the Herods brought Judaism to reproach among the Roman poets and satirists, just as Popery leads many to infidelity who are disgusted with its abominations. NOTE.—It is remarked by all critics how exactly Luke's various notices of the different Herods accord with the facts as given by Josephus, and all cotemporary historians.

14. *Many days*—literally, and when they had spent there more days—as we say "several days"—not properly "many"—long enough to pass the complimentary ceremonies of the court—*Festus laid before the king* (the facts) *in relation to Paul.* As Agrippa was a Jew, and from his youth versed in Jewish law, and especially as he was at this time the official guardian of the temple which Paul was accused of profaning, Festus, in his perplexity, (vs. 27,) sought information and counsel of one so much better versed than himself. This reference seems also to have been an adroit measure of Festus to conciliate the Jewish interest, as Paul had put it out of his power to satisfy the Jews' demand for a trial before the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. ¶ *There is a certain man left by Felix in bonds,* (δέσμιος,) a prisoner, the term which Paul often uses of himself in his Epistles written during his imprisonment at Rome, (Eph. 3: 1; 4: 1; 2 Tim. 1: 8.) Agrippa had probably heard of Paul before, and of "Jesus and the resurrection," as he heard of the Christians, vs. 27, 28.

15. *Concerning whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests and elders of the Jews tabled charges, asking* (for themselves) *sentence against him.* It would seem from vs. 3, that what they first asked was that Paul might be brought to Jerusalem for punishment, and that Festus might give sentence without

priests and the elders of the Jews informed *me*, desiring to have judgment against him.

m vs. 4, 5.

16 <sup>m</sup> To whom I answered, It is not the manner of the Romans to deliver any man to die, before that he which is accused have the accusers face to face, and have license to answer for himself concerning the crime laid against him.

n vs. 6.

17 Therefore when they were come hither, <sup>a</sup> without any delay on the morrow I sat on the judgment seat, and commanded the man to be brought forth.

18 Against whom when the accusers stood up, they brought none accusation of such things as I supposed :

o ch. 18 : 15, and 23 : 29.

19 <sup>o</sup> But had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and of one Jesus, which was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

further trial than Paul had had before Felix, together with their own accusations and testimonies, now given. Festus here puts a false coloring upon the facts, to make the best appearance before Agrippa. In vs. 4 it was on other grounds that Festus objected, viz. that Paul was a prisoner at Cesarea, and that he himself would be there shortly, when his case could be regularly tried. Here he represents himself as taking his position upon the law alone. This varnishing of Festus' statement may be observed all along, as compared with Luke's, (see vs. 20,) showing in the Roman governor the adroit tactician, aiming to maintain the law of Cæsar, yet to conciliate the Jews; and even at length proposing to Paul an additional trial at Jerusalem, contrary to the spirit of the law, both Roman and Jewish, vs. 9.

16. *To whom I answered that it is not a custom to Romans (however it may be with Jews) to deliver up (as a favor, or without cause) any man unto destruction before that the accused have the accusers face to face, &c.* Festus borrows here from Paul the very term which the Apostle used (vs. 11,) to rebuke his shameful proposal, viz. *to deliver him up as a favor*. This shows the crafty politician who draws his best phrases of right from the rebukes which the prisoner at his bar has given to his base policy. Now he represents himself to Agrippa as having

protested against the very wrong which he was ready to commit. ¶ *And have license*—literally, *have (receive) place of defense*—meaning, room or opportunity of defense—*concerning the accusation*. The Roman law required this, and the laws of civilized nations have commonly recognized the principle.

17. *Therefore, they (the accusers of Paul) having come together* (perhaps with Festus, see vs. 5,) *hither from Jerusalem to Cesarea, as required, vs. 5, having made no delay*, (as Felix had basely done with a hope of bribes, ch. 24 : 26, 27,) *on the morrow*, (as recorded by Luke, vs. 6,) *having sat down on the judgment seat, I commanded the man to be brought (forth from the prison to the tribunal.)*

18. *Against*—lit., *concerning whom—or, round about whom* (see vs. 7,) *the accusers standing*, (taking their stand,) *brought forward no (legal) accusation*, (no ground of judicial process) *of things which I supposed*—such as sedition, riot, &c., which they alleged, (ch. 24 : 5,) such as were fairly cognizable by the Roman law.

19. Literally—*but certain questions (disputes) about their own religious worship they had against him*. The term here rendered “superstition” is the noun corresponding with the adjective used of the Athenians, (ch. 17 : 22, which see and Notes.) It seems scarcely probable that Festus would have used the term in any reproachful sense of the

20 And because || I doubted of such manner of questions, || Or, *I was doubtful how to enquire hereof.* I asked *him* whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these matters.

21 But when Paul had appealed to be reserved unto the || hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept till I || Or, *judgment.* might send him to Cæsar.

Jewish religion before Agrippa, though *Beza* understands that "Festus paid no regard to the religious persuasion of Agrippa, for the governors of provinces used to prefer themselves even to kings by reason of the greatness of the people of Rome, and it is probable, also, that this Agrippa, following the footsteps of his fathers, did so profess the Jewish religion as that he should not offend the Romans." ¶ *And of (concerning) one Jesus—questions or disputes about a certain Jesus, dead, whom Paul kept asserting to be alive.* Thus Festus speaks of the matter as most insignificant, as much as to say, "what has that to do at my tribunal." So none of these things concerned Gallio as a Roman officer, and he drove them from the judgment seat, ch. 18: 15, 16. "If it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it for I will be no judge of such matters," ch. 18: 15. *Bengel* says, "See that from your heart you estimate, as of the highest importance, questions concerning Jesus." The great question of questions for every man is, *What think you of Christ?*

20. And because I doubted. Luke gives quite a different ground of Festus' proceeding, (vs. 9,) as Paul also does in his reply to the proposal, (vs. 10;) and, doubtless, Festus here makes a false representation of his real motive. He was a crafty politician, willing to maintain the form of law, but yet "willing to show the Jews a pleasure." ¶ *And I being at loss for the questioning (examination) concerning this one—not being provided with the materials for a thorough and just examination.* This was his specious pretense to Agrippa, the Jewish king. "Thou oughtest to have inquired, Festus,"—*Bengel.* ¶ *I asked him—literally, I said if (whether) he would be willing to go unto Jerusalem,*

*and there be judged concerning these things.* This would seem very fair to Agrippa. But *Beza* well asks, Why did not Festus absolve an alleged criminal against whom nothing could be proved? (See vs. 7.) Nay, by his own confession, vs. 17, 18, the accusers had brought no legal charge against him, (vs. 11.) Why needed he then to be at loss, except on the score of policy! It was really after one trial had failed to find even a legal indictment against him, that it was proposed by Festus to put him again upon trial, in the midst of his enemies, which would be only the most gratuitous delivering up of Paul to the cruel rage of his persecutors.

21. It was just this base proposal of Festus which drove Paul in self-protection to stand upon his right of Roman citizenship and appeal unto Cæsar. Festus conceals the grounds of Paul's appeal, though they were so distinctly given to the discredit of the proposal. ¶ *But Paul having (formally) appealed that he be kept unto (for) the hearing (decision, diagnosis) of Augustus.* The object of Paul's appeal was that he might have his case carried up to the Imperial tribunal at Rome. ¶ *Augustus*—the title given to the Roman Emperor Octavianus, the famous "Augustus Cæsar," by the Roman Senate for his singular virtues, and retained by his successors. The term means *august—venerable.* The name "Cæsar" was also assumed by the emperors as successors of Julius Cæsar. Paul uses only this latter title, but Festus uses the former, as a cringing dependent of the emperor would do. ¶ *I commanded him to be kept (instead of given up, as he had proposed,) till (the time) when I shall send him to Cæsar.* No thanks to Festus for this. He could not do otherwise than grant his appeal. NOTE.—In giving us this statement of Festus



See ch. 9: 15.

22 Then <sup>P</sup> Agrippa said unto Festus, I would also hear the man myself. To-morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23 And on the morrow, when Agrippa was come, and Bernice, with great pomp, and was entered into the place of hearing, with the chief captains, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment Paul was brought forth.

24 And Festus said, King Agrippa, and all men which  
 \* vs. 2, 3, 7. are here present with us, ye see this man, about whom \*all  
 the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me, both at  
 / ch. 22: 22. Jerusalem, and *also* here, crying that he ought \*not to  
 live any longer.

as well as his own, Luke has shown to us the character of the governor—plausible, politic and deceitful, so much so that many Christian readers do not yet fully detect his cunning. Yet the Roman law is strong, and serves Paul for a protection.

22. Agrippa, after this statement, having had his interest excited in the case, and perhaps implying in the term here used that he had long wished to see Paul, said unto Festus, *I wished also myself to hear the man*, or, *I was wishing*, either just now, or for some time. But the best grammarians give the sense as this, “*I would*, (that is, if I might,)” as in Rom. 9: 3. “*A prudent wish*. If thou knowest for thyself, thou wilt see and hear more than others tell thee.”—Bengel.

23. *On the morrow, then*.—Festus makes prompt arrangement, for he had also his own object in view, on account of which he had stated the case to Agrippa. ¶ *Agrippa having come, and Bernice, with great pomp*, without any pious desire to hear the Gospel from Paul's lips, but rather with much *parade*, “in the very same city in which his father had died, having been eaten of worms on account of his pride”—and having entered into the place of hearing (audience chamber,) with the chief captains and eminent men of the city. Five cohorts, each commanded by a chief captain, were stationed at Cesarea, (Jos. B. J. iii. 4, 2,) and the city magistrates and officials, are here called *men who by eminence were of the city*. These civil and military dignitaries made up a

more imposing audience than any which Paul had here addressed. It was an escort in honor of the king. “In Jerusalem the long suffering of the Lord toward the rejecters of the Gospel was now exhausted. In Antioch, the residence of the Præses of Syria, the new Mother Church of Jewish and Gentile Christians was flourishing. Here in Cesarea, the residence of the Procurator, the testimony which had begun in the house of Cornelius the centurion, has now risen upward, till it comes before this brilliant assembly of all the local authorities in the presence of the last king of the Jews.”—*Stier, Red. Apos.* ¶ *And Festus having commanded, Paul was brought*. The prisoners pleaded sometimes in their chains.—*Tac. Ann.* 4: 28. Yet more and more complete must the giving of the testimony in these parts be, before the witness departs for Rome.

24. Festus now makes, for all present, a brief statement of the case and of his object in bringing Paul forward for this hearing after Paul had made a formal appeal to Cæsar, showing that it was not any judicial investigation that was proposed at this time, and that he had granted his appeal, but that he really was at a loss how to describe the case to the emperor. ¶ *Ye see* (or, *behold ye*) *this one, concerning whom all the multitude of the Jews have dealt with me* (have interceded with me)—all parties having seemed now to unite in calling for his death, or at least the great majority—the *mass, crying out* (by their deputation here,) *that he ought not to live any longer*. They call

25 But when I found that <sup>a ch. 23: v, 29, and 26: 31.</sup> he had committed nothing worthy of death, <sup>† vs. 11, 12.</sup> and that he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26 Of whom I have no certain thing to write unto my lord. Wherefore I have brought him forth before you, and specially before thee, O king Agrippa, that, after examination had, I might have somewhat to write.

27 For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not withal to signify the crimes *laid* against him.

ed for his death, yet produced no charges calling for his death, (vs. 25.)

25. *But I, having ascertained* (see ch. 4: 13; 10: 34,) *that he had committed nothing worthy of death*, (why then did he not acquit and release him?) *and this man himself having appealed to Cæsar*, (but as a last resort, and only because he could not get justice at the hand of Festus, though Festus says nothing of this,) *I determined to send him*—which indeed he could not avoid.

26. *No certain* (assured) *thing*. This is now the perplexity of Festus, that as he had taken no straightforward course, he had no straightforward account to give of the case, as it must go up to the Imperial tribunal. This is always the embarrassment of untruth in word or conduct. It can tell no plain, simple story. It can give no clear account of itself. The magistrates were bound, in case of appeal, to send up to the emperor a full report of the proceedings already taken, and a clear statement of the accusation.—*Suet. V. Aug. 53.* And just because Festus had not been able to find any charge made out against the prisoner that was cognizable at a Roman court, he ought to have set him at liberty. ¶ *To my lord*—that is, to Nero, the emperor. This title of the Roman emperors was not allowed by Augustus nor by Tiberius to be applied to them. It was considered as implying that the subjects were slaves. But it had now come into use. Caligula is said to have accepted it, and then his successors. Nero demanded it, but it was not a recognized title of the emperors before Domitian. Pliny applies it to Trajan, but intimates that it is

used in a parental sense. ¶ *Wherefore I brought him forth before you* (*upon you*) who are here assembled. The preposition implies that though to some extent the case is rested *upon* these persons, yet it is only in a limited way, and for the purpose specified. Of course the prisoner, having appealed to Cæsar, could not be judged now by Agrippa and his attendants. Paul was to bear witness before Gentiles and kings, (ch. 9: 15,) and now first is our Lord's prophecy fulfilled to him, Matt. 10: 18; Mark 13: 19. ¶ *And especially before thee*. Festus refers the case to Agrippa as an umpire well suited to suggest some view which would compromise the differences between his own opinion and that of the Jews, and thus enable him to send Paul to the emperor according to the provisions of the law. Agrippa is well fitted for this position in the view of Festus, because of his acquaintance with Jewish questions and customs, and his familiarity with the Jewish people. He had shown a Jewish zeal on certain occasions, though the Jews reproached him for the lack of it. Festus declares his object to be *that the examination taking place* (being held) *I may have somewhat to write*.

27. *For it seems unreasonable* (*foolish, absurd,*) *sending a prisoner and not also to signify the legal charges against him*. Festus pretends that his difficulty grows out of his ignorance in Jewish affairs, which Agrippa, therefore, can relieve; while, in truth, he has gotten into a ridiculous dilemma by his own temporizing policy. Now he has some hope that this hearing by Agrippa, who is a representative of Cæsar,

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1 THEN Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth the hand, and answered for himself:

may give him a way to escape. He was liable to rebuke or punishment from Nero, if he should send up to his court a Roman citizen who had been held so long in custody, without any clear and well sustained charges.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

§ 38. PAUL'S FIFTH AND LAST DEFENSE—VIZ. BEFORE AGRIPPA, WHEN ABOUT TO LEAVE THE HOLY LAND FOR ROME. A. D. 60. Ch. 26: 1-29.

The prisoner, a persecuted missionary of Christ to the Gentiles, here once more appears on trial, and is called to vindicate himself against the unjust accusations of the enemy. Paul is now before the highest representative of Cæsar, on the one hand, and the representatives of the highest Jewish tribunal on the other. The plea which he makes is much like that in ch. 22; only that instead of so particularly confuting the charges as before, he now pleads his Divine commission, and to show that he could not disobey the heavenly call, he narrates again his wonderful conversion, and shows how it was attested by a miracle, which the Jews were bound to regard as evidencing the Divine authority. Yet so far from being an apostate, he was the most strict of the Jews—a Pharisee, in all his early life, and now was arraigned for cleaving to the ancient hope of Israel, (vss. 6, 7,) so that the Jewish people were the apostates and not himself; and he would have them see the truth of the case. He himself also first persecuted the adherents of this Christian faith as the Jews were now persecuting him, vss. 9, 10. But he had been led to see his grievous error by the miraculous appearance to him of Jesus Christ Himself, just as really as God ever ap-

peared to their fathers, vss. 13-18. We shall see that in this last defense Paul gained from this last Prince of the house of Herod and the representative of Israel, who was at the same time a tributary king of Cæsar's throne, a verdict of his innocence. And here Paul is stamped by the seal of the Spirit as a *Prince of the true Israel*, who has power with God and with men, and *prevails*. Therefore he could have no option, but must go forward, (vs. 19,) even though he should incur the enmity of his countrymen, (vs. 21,) because he was sustained by Divine help, (vs. 22,) and he therefore went on testifying according to the ancient prophecies, the wonderful truth so disesteemed by them, that the Messiah must needs both suffer to death and rise from the dead, as the Saviour of men, both of Jews and Gentiles, vss. 22, 23. He would, therefore, appeal to Agrippa for the truth of these ancient prophecies, and thus he would plant himself upon the very word of God. We shall see that all the various dignitaries before whom Paul had appeared on trial, agreed in pronouncing the Jewish accusations groundless. Agrippa was still a different character from Felix and Festus. He was the polite hearer, and the prince of fair promises.

1. Agrippa having heard the statement of the case by Festus, (ch. 25: 14-27) and presiding by courtesy, bids the prisoner to proceed in his own defense, as he was now ready to hear him, according to the invitation and arrangement of Festus, *to speak for thyself*—literally, *in thine own behalf*; or, as some late critics have the text—*concerning thyself*. Paul being a prisoner in bonds, (vs. 29,) *stretched forth the hand* that was chained to a soldier, (after the custom of orators,) and *answered for himself*—literally, *apologized, defended himself*.

2 I think myself happy, king Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews:

3 Especially *because I know* thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews: wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4 My manner of life from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews;

5 Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after \* the most straitest sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

6 <sup>b</sup> And now I stand and am judged for the hope of \* the promise made of God unto our fathers:

a ch. 22: 3, and 22: 6, and 1 24: 15-21.  
Phil. 3: 5.  
b ch. 23: 6.  
c Gen. 3: 15, and 22: 18, and 26: 4, and 49: 10.  
Deut. 18: 15.  
2 Sam. 7: 12.  
Ps. 132: 11.  
Isa. 4: 2, and 7: 14, and 9: 6, and 40: 10.  
Jer. 23: 5, and 33: 14, 15, 16.  
Ez. 34: 23, and 37: 24.  
Dan. 9: 24.  
Micah 7: 20.  
ch. 13: 32.  
Rom. 15: 8.  
Titus 2: 13.

2. The opening of his address is conciliatory, showing manliness of tone and calmness of feeling. ¶ *Concerning all things which I am accused of by the Jews,* (altogether Jewish,) *O King Agrippa, I have thought myself happy, being about to defend myself upon you—* as thrown upon your judgment for a verdict, though it was not formal and final. Paul expressed himself as glad to appear before one who was familiar with the Jewish law.

3. *Especially you being experienced* (accus. absolute,) or, *as you are—literally, a knower of all the customs and questions throughout the Jews.* This was an advantage which Paul would have now at the last, to make this fifth and closing defense before a king, (ch. 9: 15,) who, while he was a dependent of Cæsar, was also a Jew by training and profession, well versed in the usages and controversies of the Jews; who while he was the guardian of the temple and high priesthood, was also the high guardian of Cæsar's law, and familiar with the rights of one who was a Roman citizen, while he was also a Jew. ¶ *Wherefore—*Paul asks a patient hearing—the term is from the noun which signifies *long suffering*. *I beseech thee hear me with long suffering.*

4. As though he had said, *Well then, my manner of life—lit., my (mode of) living, which was from youth—which from the beginning took place in my nation in Jerusalem, &c.* He thus aims to show

that his Jewish training was early—from the start—and that he was no novice in Jewish matters—"brought up at the feet of Gamaliel," ch. 22: 3—not abroad among the Gentiles, (though born in Tarsus,) but in, among his own nation of the Jews, as he said on the castle stairs—"in this city," at Jerusalem. And for these facts he could appeal to all—for this, he says, *know all the Jews*. He must have made himself notorious as a Jew, to have had the persecutor's commission from the Sanhedrim to which he refers, (vs. 12,) and thus was sadly known by them even to strange cities, as Damascus, &c., as a most eminent zealot for the Jewish law, ch. 22: 3-5.

5. *Which knew me—lit., foreknowing me—knowing me before* (this) *from the first—if they be willing to testify—that according to the most exact sect of our religious worship,* (as between the different religious divisions or parties, Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes,) *I lived a Pharisee.* See ch. 24: 14. So he declares, also, ch. 23: 7; Phil. 3: 5. These were the strictest of all the Jews in a punctilious observance of the law, (Luke 11: 42,) and he means to say that he was "a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee," Phil. 3: 5.

6. *And now, (at this day,) upon* (the ground of) *a hope of the promise made from God to our fathers, I stand* (have stood) *judged—*(I have stood on trial.)

<sup>d</sup> James 1:1.  
<sup>f</sup> Gr. *night and day*.  
<sup>e</sup> Luke 2:37.  
<sup>1</sup> Thess 3:10.  
<sup>1</sup> Tim. 5:5.  
<sup>f</sup> Phil. 5:11.

7 Unto which *promise* <sup>d</sup> our twelve tribes, instantly serving *God* <sup>f</sup> day and night, <sup>e</sup> hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

He seems to refer to his having so often been put upon his defense. He resolves all their charges against him to the hope he had expressed and boasted and proclaimed, which he says (lit.) is a *hope of* (founded on) *the promise to our fathers which has become* (come to pass) *from God*. The promise was the promise of the Messiah. (See the marginal references.) The fulfillment of that promise in the advent of Jesus Christ had been attested by the resurrection of Christ, (see ch. 13:32,) as He had been "declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead," (Rom. 1:4.) And this resurrection of Christ is the basis of our Christian hope, as sealing His finished work, and giving the pledge of our own resurrection. For if Christ be not risen, our faith is vain. 1 Cor. 25:17. See also ch. 17:31. Before Felix, Paul had so expressed himself as having a hope of the resurrection of the dead, which they themselves also allow, or entertain, ch. 24:15; 23:6. So here he pleads with Agrippa as to the credibility of the doctrine, vs. 8. And in Heb. 11, where he gives the list of Old Testament worthies, from Abel down through the Patriarchs, he labors to show that the fathers looked for a better country, that is, a heavenly, (Heb. 11:16,) and that Abraham believed in the resurrection, in the case of Isaac, Heb. 11:19.

7. He here declares that this promise of the Messiah from which springs the hope of the general resurrection, is that which is also the object of the national hope. "The hope of Israel" was the Messiah, and "the restoration" through Him. That restoration, properly understood, involved not a restitution of the national kingdom, (ch. 1:6, 7,) but a restitution which looks beyond the grave for its more glorious consummation—the raising of

the dry bones of Israel to a spiritual life, (Ezek. 37:11,) that "so all Israel may be saved." (Rom. 11:26.) Now Paul had seen the risen Jesus revealed to him—and now he sees the hope of Israel linked with the inheritance of Canaan the other side the grave. Thus he expounds the true and proper hope of Israel, as set forth in all the Old Testament institutions, and shows in the Epistle to the Hebrews what is "*the rest*" into which our New Testament Joshua—Jesus Christ—conducts the true Israel. Heb. ch. 4:1-11. The true Canaan, the substance of Israel's hope, was always the heavenly Canaan; and therefore THE HOPE, properly understood, involves the doctrine of a resurrection from the dead. Paul, therefore, lays great stress upon this, and sets forth his hope accordingly, where he defines his position as a true Israelite, Phil. 3:4-11. Therefore, at Athens, the sum of his preaching was, "*Jesus and the resurrection*," ch. 17:18. He shows that this is that (promise) *unto which our twelve tribes* (all included as the Jewish Church and people, notwithstanding the dispersion of the ten tribes, (2 Kings 17:23, 18:1,) because the promise was made, and stands on record for the entire people,) *hope to come*. See Ezra 2:70; Neh. 7:73. So Ezra 6:17; 8:35. So the Epistle of James is addressed "to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad," (James 1:1,) which, therefore, is another epistle to the Hebrews as a nation. And there was an intermingling of the twelve tribes during the captivity. And Peter's epistles also, are to the converted Jews of the dispersion, (1:1,) and first of all he speaks of *the lively hope* to which Christians are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto an inheritance (not of the earthly Canaan, but that which it signified and pointed to,) 'incorruptible, &c. 1 Pet. 1:3, 4

8 Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?

9.<sup>s</sup> I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do <sup>John 16:2.</sup> <sup>1 Tim. 1:12.</sup> many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

¶ *Instantly—intensely*—lit., *with intensity—earnestness, serving God* (with outward rites of worship) *day and night*—in constant attendance on the ritual worship, as Anna “departed not from the temple, but served God (same term as here,) with fastings and prayers *night and day*.” Luke 2:37. See 1 Tim. 5:5; ch. 18:1. ¶ *Hope to come*. Paul himself had attained “Christ the hope of glory,” but had not attained the resurrection which was already involved in Him. Phil. 3:11. Yet this consummation of his hope he was pressing forward to reach. And this same hope is the substance of the promise made to the fathers, and that which they all hope somehow to obtain. Heb. 11. Only Israel, in rejecting Christ and still laboriously cleaving to the temple services, had not attained the hope as he had done, for he saw in Jesus the promised Messiah. Yet their profession in all their sacrifices, was that they were looking for the Messiah, and in Him for the restoration and eternal rest—the heavenly Canaan promised to Israel. *Promise* is a peculiar element of Judaism as a system, pointing onward to Christianity, and designed to be a preparation for it. It was indeed *a religion of the future*. ¶ *For which, &c.*—lit., *concerning which hope, King Agrippa, I am accused by the Jews*. Recent editions read, “*by Jews*,” and the idea is thus more forcibly presented, that he is accused for holding the true doctrine of their Scriptures and of their fathers—and that they, not he, must be regarded as deserting the faith. He does not here notice the other accusations brought against him. They had been disproved and possibly withdrawn. So he says at Rome. “*For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain*.” The Prophet Jeremiah uses this as the title of God, the Saviour, “O the Hope of Israel” Jer. 14:8; 17:3. After

thus declaring that his crime is simply that he holds the ancient Jewish faith and hope, he now passes at once to the vital point which they deemed (some of them at least) so incredible, especially in the case of Jesus of Nazareth. (Some read it, “*What? is it judged?*” &c. But the word *τι*, when thus used, is always connected with some expletive.) *Why is it judged?* &c. As though he had said, “You Jews who entertain the hope of a Messiah to come, and reject the doctrine of the Messiah as having come, disbelieving in the vital truth of the resurrection in His case, though this is the very seal set by the Father upon His Messiahship, “*Why should it be judged a thing incredible to you, if God raises the dead?*” One of their own prophets (Elisha) had raised the dead, (2 Kings 4:32.) It had been expressly predicted of the Messiah that His flesh should not see corruption, (Ps. 16:10,) as Peter had shown, (ch. 2:27–32.) And did not the strictest Jews always believe in a general resurrection, of which this, indeed, was only “the *first fruits*”—like the specimen ear of grain presented at the Passover? See 1 Cor. 15:12, 20, 23.

9. He now passes to notice the steps by which he had been brought from his former Jewish disbelief to the embrace of this Gospel of Christ. He was once as blind and hostile as they. He is able, therefore, to give his testimony as that of one who had been an enemy, and to this end he relates his own experience—to show especially that he had seen the RISEN JESUS, and that he could no longer disbelieve nor disobey, vss. 14, 15. He says, *I myself indeed, therefore*—before I had seen the crucified Jesus *risen*, and had found Him thus to be the promised Messiah—*thought (seemed) to myself*, or as it *may* be rendered, *thought that I myself must do* (practice, as a duty,) *many things*

<sup>a</sup> ch. 8:3.  
Gal. 1:13.

<sup>f</sup> ch. 9:14, 21,  
and 22:3.

<sup>g</sup> ch. 22:19.

10 <sup>h</sup> Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority <sup>i</sup> from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against *them*.

11 <sup>k</sup> And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and

contrary to the name of Jesus the Nazarene. I myself thought, indeed, that it was my duty (Phil. 3:6; 1 Tim. 1:13,) to oppose exceedingly the name, the claims (and the profession by others) of Jesus whom I despised as the Nazarene. But when this same "Jesus of Nazareth" revealed Himself to him on the road to Damascus, as risen from the dead—the same who was lately crucified at Jerusalem, and whom the Apostles and Stephen preached as having risen—this was, indeed, enough to change his views. Luke has given one account of Paul's conversion, (ch. 9,) and Paul himself has given two narratives of the same event, (ch. 22) and here, with only the natural variations.

10. He now goes on to particulars—showing how he had pursued the very course of these his persecutors until he was so arrested by the Lord Himself. ¶ *Which thing also I did*—(according to my conviction of duty, thinking that I was doing God service)—*in Jerusalem*, as was very well known by the Sanhedrim who were now bringing these accusations against him. So that he had been not only a Pharisee, but also a persecutor, equal in zeal and cruelty to any. ¶ *And many of the saints*—that is, *the Christians*—those who professed to be such—without asserting that in every case they were truly regenerate. The term is used in the Epistles frequently, and especially in the *salutations* of them. Here Paul calls them "*saints*," though in the ear of a Jew the term was appropriate only to the chosen people. The Apostle pleading before the Jews, (ch. 22:4,) had spoken of them inoffensively as "*them of this way*." But here, where he was speaking before distinguished hearers who were not now his formal judges, he calls them by a title of honor, which at the same time reflects greater discredit and shame upon him-

self. Luke in his account of it calls them "*the disciples of the Lord*," ch. 9:1. But when Ananias complains of Saul's cruel treatment of the Christians, he calls them by this term, "*the saints*," ch. 9:13. And they are called by the same term, ch. 9:32, 41. ¶ *I shut up in prisons, receiving the (necessary) authority from the chief priests*, (the Sanhedrim,)—for which he applied to the high priest, (ch. 9:2,) the President of the Sanhedrim. This shows how fully he acted as a Jew, and served the highest councils of his nation up to that time. This is a glimpse of the "great persecution" which raged at the time of Stephen's death, (ch. 8:1.) ¶ *As they also were led away to death, I cast my vote against (them.)* Others suffered martyrdom besides Stephen, chs. 7 and 8. The term for *vote* means *pebble*, by which votes were anciently cast; and it is thought by many to imply his official vote, as a member of the Sanhedrim. But this is judged improbable, both from Saul's youth, (though he may have been *thirty*, the requisite age,) and from his being most likely unmarried—for the members of the Sanhedrim were required to be married men, or, at least, none others could vote in criminal or capital cases, as a father's heart was judged to be more mercifully inclined than others. It may mean no more than what is said, ch. 8:1, that he was *consenting*—concurring—in opinion. And this is the language he uses, ch. 22:20. So we use the term "*suffrage*," and this term is thus used by Plato.

11. *And through all the synagogues often punishing them, I was forcing them—by threats and torture—(sought to compel them) to blaspheme.* In ch. 22:19, he says, "I beat in every synagogue," &c. The imperfect tense here used, and rendered "*compelled*," expresses only the *attempt* without respect

compelled *them* to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted *them* even unto strange cities.

12 <sup>1</sup>Whereupon as I went to Damascus with authority <sup>1 ch. 9:3, and 22:6.</sup> and commission from the chief priests,

13 At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me.

14 And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice

to the success or otherwise. Pliny, the Proconsul of Bithynia, in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, about A. D. 102, writes that it was required of the Christians to *blaspheme Christ*, but that none who were truly such could be compelled to do it. ¶ *And being exceedingly enraged against them, I persecuted them as far as even unto outside (foreign) cities*—cities outside of Judea. It is not unlikely that he pursued the Christians from place to place on the way to Damascus, and that city is mentioned because there it was that he was arrested. All this shows his hot and furious zeal as a Jew against the rising Christianity, which he now professes. It may here be meant that he sought them out through all the synagogue districts, or by the aid of all the respective synagogues—or that he brought them up before the civil assemblies, or that he punished them in the synagogues. *Epiphanius* mentions a Jew who was scourged in the synagogue for embracing Christianity.

12. He proceeds now to account for the sudden and amazing change in his views and feelings, and shows that so far from being an apostate from his religion, he was constrained by Divine revelation to act as he had done in adherence to Christianity. ¶ *Whereupon*—literally, *in which things also*—in the midst of these persecutions—*journeying unto Damascus*, (the capital city of Syria,) *with authority and commission which is from the chief priests*—which they alone could grant. See ch. 24:18. In this particular mention of the authority by which he acted, he shows how thorough a Jew he was up to the moment of his conversion, and how he had been madly carrying out their hostility against Christians. As though he had said, I

was lately just as bitter and violent as any of my persecutors now are against Christianity. I went the farthest in executing the commission which I obtained from this same Sanhedrim who are now pursuing me. I deserve all this persecution, as it is only what I have rendered to others. And I should have been this day just as malignant as any here in this hostility, but for a Divine revelation, which I shall now relate, and which (as all Jews ought to admit,) is ample authority for obeying the direction—even as such a vision was authority to Abraham to offer up Isaac, and so with all the fathers.

13. *At midday*—"About noon," ch. 22:6. The time is given, as if to anticipate all skeptical attempts to explain away the miracle. It was not any flash of lightning or other natural phenomenon, for it occurred at noon, and the intimation is that the sun was shining in full splendor. The expression used here and in ch. 9 is never used to describe *lightning*, but indicates the Shekinah, or Divine glory, which always accompanies the manifestations of the Godhead, and is a symbol of the unapproachable and spiritual effulgence in which He dwells. This light is here described as *above the brightness of the sun*—exceeding in splendor the brightness of the noonday sun. This narrative is given by the Apostle with greater fullness than the former, as this is his concluding defense within the precincts of the Holy Land. ¶ *Shining round about me and them which journeyed with me*, so that they who were with me saw indeed the light and were afraid, (ch. 22:19,) implying that it was a light to be seen at noon, and beyond the *sunlight*.

14. *And when, &c.* Lit., *And we ad*



speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? *it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.*

15 And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, <sup>as ch. 22:15.</sup> to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee:

*having fallen to (unto) the earth, I heard, &c.* In ch. 9, Luke gives the narrative, and says that Paul fell to the earth, (vs. 4,) and that his attendants "*stood speechless,*" that is, *were speechless*, saying nothing as to whether they fell and rose again, or not. Paul would naturally give fuller particulars in this closing address. Here he adds that the voice spake to him *in the Hebrew tongue.* This fact is not mentioned in the general statement by Luke, ch. 9:4, nor in Paul's previous narrative when he was speaking to the Jews in that tongue. But even in those passages it is implied by the term *Σαουλ* in that dialect—the Aramaic, which was then the vernacular language of Palestine. ¶ *Why persecutest thou me?* Saul is here given to understand that the persecution was regarded by this glorious Being as the persecution of Him. And hence he was most deeply impressed with the intimate and vital union existing between Christ and His Church, so that this doctrine is every where fully brought out in his Epistles. How this revelation, also, gave Paul the richest solace under his own grievous persecutions, to think that Christ regards Himself as suffering in and with His members. ¶ *It is hard, &c.* See ch. 9:5. Christ says not, "It is hard for me," but, "*It is hard for thee.*" What tender compassion toward the sinner! And if Jesus Christ can thus subdue and melt such a hardened foe of Christianity, who is there that is beyond the power of His grace to convert? ¶ *To kick.* As oxen driven before the plow, kick against the goad which is armed with a sharp iron, and thus get only lacerated for their pains—how hard it is for thee to be resisting thus when you must be

the sufferer, fighting against Jehovah and being only wounded more and more. ¶ *I am Jesus.* In ch. 22:8, it is, "Jesus of Nazareth." It was a revelation to Paul of THE RISEN JESUS—the same despised Nazarene who was so lately crucified at Jerusalem. Of course, He must have been raised from the dead. And if so, this proved Him to be the Son of God, Rom. 1:4. By this one revelation all His claims were at once established. If this is, indeed, Jesus of Nazareth, then He must be the Messiah, for He promised to rise again, and He made this the test of all His pretensions. And by this the Father set His seal upon His word and work as true and accepted on high. Besides, the resurrection proved thus in His case, is the pledge and earnest of the glorious resurrection of His believing people. 1 Cor. ch. 15.

16. *But rise—rise up.* This command was given to him both by Christ and by Ananias, ch. 22:10, 16, first with reference to going to Damascus, and next with reference to his rising up and being baptized on the spot, while standing up, ch. 22:16. ¶ *For unto this (end) I have appeared unto thee—been seen by thee.* I, who am ascended to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, and whom the heavens must (necessarily) receive until the epochs of restitution of all things—I have appeared to thee in my proper glory, as the Shekinah of the Temple, dwelling between the cherubim, 1 John 1:5. ¶ *To make thee.* In ch. 22:14, the same word is rendered, "*He hath chosen thee.*" It means, *hath fore-ordained thee.* This is the disclosure of an eternal purpose, and no novelty nor accident. Paul was thus far the only one

17 Delivering thee from the people, and *from* the Gentiles, <sup>a</sup>unto whom now I send thee.

18 <sup>o</sup>To open their eyes, and <sup>p</sup>to turn *them* from darkness to light, and *from* the power of Satan unto God, <sup>q</sup>that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and <sup>r</sup>inheritance among them which are <sup>s</sup>sanctified, by faith that is in me.

<sup>a</sup> ch. 22:21.  
<sup>o</sup> Isa. 35:5, and  
42:7.  
Luke 1:79.  
John 8:12.  
2 Cor. 4:4.  
Eph. 1:18.  
1 Thess. 5:5.  
<sup>p</sup> 2 Cor. 6:14.  
Eph. 4:18, and  
9:8.  
Col. 1:13.  
2 Pet. 2:9, 25.

of the Apostles to whom Christ revealed Himself in the glory of His ascended estate. Though He appeared to the eleven as the risen Lord, and from the invisible world, yet only to Paul had He yet appeared in a glory beyond that of the transfiguration. He was, indeed, "transfigured" before the favored three, Peter, James, and John, in order that they might thus get glimpses of the heavenly and eternal glory that belonged to Him. But here He shines forth in something of His own glorified effulgence. After this He reveals Himself still further to John at Patmos, "and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength," Rev. 1:16. ¶ *A minister and a witness.* He was to be a *servant* in the way of *witnessing*, or witness-bearing to others—*both of those things which thou hast seen*, (ch. 22:15,) as here, for example, he bears witness before Felix, Festus and Agrippa. ¶ *And of the things which*—that is, of other visions which he should afterwards have, as ch. 18:9; 23:11; 2 Cor. 2:2. NOTE.—We have in these words almost the same language as that of Ananias, ch. 22:15, and as Ananias was sent by God, his address to Paul may be considered as God's.

17. *Delivering thee—rescuing thee.* This deliverance was promised in connection with his obedience, and in the way of accomplishing God's plans for the salvation of others. This implies his persecution both *by the people* (the Jewish people) and *by the Gentiles*, (vs. 20,) and such promise was implied in the commission, and it was expressed, also, as ch. 18:9, 10; 22:18; 23:11; 2 Cor. 12:1; Gal. 1:12—as Whitfield said, "I am immortal till my work is done." Agrippa believed in prophecy as a seal of God's commission. ¶ *To whom*—to both the Jews

and Gentiles, but especially to the latter; and he preached to both—*first* to the Jews, and when they rejected, then turning to the Gentiles. ¶ *I send thee.* This is the direct and positive form of Paul's commission as an Apostle.

18. The great objects of his apostleship are here set forth. "A noble description (says *Bengel*,) of the whole process of conversion." ¶ *To open their eyes.* He who sends Paul opens the eyes; and He does it by the instrumentality of Paul. Christ Himself was commissioned "to preach recovering of sight to the blind," to be brought about in the use of Gospel means and agencies, (Luke 4:18; see Isa. 43:6, 7, and this He continues to do in His Church, by the Spirit who anointed Him for this purpose, as that Spirit works through the means of grace and by the instrumental agency of the living preacher. NOTE.—This great work of the ministry implies that men are blind by nature, and the same power as is needed to create men is requisite to make any man "a new creation." See Eph. 1:11, 18; Col. 1:12; 1 Pet. 1:4. ¶ *To turn—for turning.* The same form of the verb is used 2 Pet. 2:21; see also vs. 30; ch. 14:15. The object of opening their eyes was *their turning from darkness to light*, which they could not before distinguish nor appreciate, "that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." Conversion is that course of altered living which follows upon God's act of regeneration. It is the new life which results from the renewal of the heart. See Isa. 9:2. From being children of darkness they should become, by Divine power and grace, children of light, so as to walk as children of light—turning away

7 Luke 1:77.  
8 Eph. 1:11.  
Col. 1:12.  
9 ch. 20:32.  
10 ch. 9:20, 22,  
29, and 11:26.

19 Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision:

20 But 'shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at

from works of darkness and coming to the light, and walking in the light of the Son of Righteousness. This great work contemplates, as a further step, the turning of men from the *authority of Satan*—from his bondage of worldliness and sin *unto God*, as a further result of opening the blind eyes. Satan holds men in his power—Christ comes as their Deliverer, to set them free from this degrading slavery. And conversion is the turning away from his ensnaring, captivating power unto God. It is, therefore, a turning away from misery to happiness—from bondage to freedom—from the control and servitude of the devil to the free service of God. And the Holy Spirit in His renewing work does thus convince us of our sin and misery, and enlighten our minds in the knowledge of Christ and renew our wills, and persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the Gospel. Hence this great work contemplates, also, *forgiveness of sins*, which sinners are to *receive* as a free gift, by “turning to God,” who alone can give it. Christ is “exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins,” (ch. 5:31.) All the work hinges, therefore, upon the opening of the blind eyes, a work of sovereign power and grace. But any blind Bartimeus can cry, Have mercy on me, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And all God’s plans in the Gospel, the Church and the ministry, are to this end, to grant all these saving blessings freely. Christ is exalted for this very end. And further, the work in its consummation contemplates that men shall receive *inheritance* in the heavenly Canaan, a patrimony as children of God and of light, which they get by testament, by virtue of their filial relation to God in Christ. Eph. 1:11, 14, 18; 5:5; Col. 1:12; 3:24. “If children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 8:17; Heb. 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4.) It

is an *inheritance among them which are sanctified*. “For He who sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,” &c. Heb. 2:11. “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,” &c. Only the sanctified can enjoy the inheritance; so we give thanks to Him who makes us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Col. 1:12, 13. Only the true believer can be sanctified. All this privilege of the enlightening and forgiveness and deliverance and inheritance Christ declares to be, *by faith that is in me*. The only salvation is by faith in Christ as a personal Saviour and in His finished work. Paul is here commissioned to preach faith; and He is the great Apostle of Faith. These points, here brought forward, he treats most fully in the Epistles, especially to the Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians and Hebrews. We receive all the blessings of the Gospel freely *by faith in Christ*. Gal. 5:6; James 2:17, 22, 26; John 3:23.

19: *Whereupon*—literally, *whence*—having received such a Divine commission, *I was not*—(literally, *I became not*,) I did not prove—*disobedient*. The term means also, *unbelieving*. So faith and works belong together. One word may answer for both. *Without faith* we are also *unfaithful*. Christian faith is the source of all Christian works. Heb. ch. 11. ¶ *The heavenly vision*, or *apparition*—in which Jesus appeared to him, Paul obeyed, because he believed it.

20. He now declares how promptly and fully he carried out the Divine instructions according to this miraculous commission. Not disobedient to the vision, *but to those at Damascus first, and Jerusalem and unto all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, telling* (declaring) *to repent, &c.* Paul here gives

Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do <sup>u</sup> works meet for repentance.

21 For these causes <sup>x</sup> the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. and 13, and 14,  
and 16, and 17,  
and 18, and 19,  
and 20, and 21.  
u Matt. 3: 8.  
x ch. 21: 30, 31.

22 Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying <sup>y</sup> none other things than those <sup>z</sup> which the prophets and <sup>y</sup> Moses did say should come. y Luke 24: 27,  
44.  
z ch. 24: 14, and  
28: 28.  
Rom. 3: 21.  
x John 5: 46.

an outline of his labors—First he preached in the synagogues at *Damascus*, (ch. 9: 20; 22: 27,) and seems to have been coming in and going out of the city in these labors during his three years in Arabia, (Gal. 1: 22,) and (to those) at *Jerusalem* (ch. 9: 26, 29,) and unto all the region of *Judea*—that is, after his second visit to Jerusalem, (with the alms, ch. 11: 30.) See ch. 12: 25. This was prior to the missionary commission, ch. 13: 2. And (then) to the Gentiles—as Missionary of the Church at Antioch, and sent also by the Holy Ghost, ch. 13: 42, 48; 14: 1, 15, 21, 25, 26; 15: 35; 16: 13, 32; 17: 17; 18: 4; 19: 10. Thus he shows that he labored first among the Jews; and even when he went to the Gentiles as a foreign missionary of the Church of Antioch, he preached to the Jews first—to repent and turn to God—to change the mind, and to “turn from the power of Satan unto God,” (vs. 18,) doing (practicing) works worthy of the repentance (referred to)—works befitting this repentance unto life—works such as should show their repentance to be sincere. This was also the exhortation of John the Baptist, whom the Jews recognized as a prophet. When the Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by him, he said, “Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance,” Matt. 3: 8. And so our Lord said, “For by their fruits ye shall know them.” Repentance is not merely a duty, but a privilege—as it is to turn back from a yawning pit, from a fearful precipice, from a den of beasts, from danger and death—so is it to turn from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God.

21. *For these causes*—literally, on account of these things—his labors among the Jews and Gentiles thus carried on according to his commission—the Jews caught (seized) me in the temple, referring to his first arrest at Jerusalem, which was led on by the Ephesian Jews, ch. 21: 28, 29. Those Asiatic Jews had known of Paul at Ephesus and thereabouts preaching Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, and the equality of the Gentiles in the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, and on account of these things they sought to kill him—literally, endeavored to lay (murderous) hands on me—that is, by lawless violence, the same term as applied to our Lord, ch. 5: 30.

22. *Having therefore, &c.*—literally, Therefore, (or, so then,) having obtained the help from God—which God alone could give, (vs. 12,) and without which he must have fallen under his persecutions. Ch. 21: 31–33; 22: 23–25; 23: 6; 24: 5, 27; 25: 10, 11. This fact of the Divine protection he gives as the only accounting for his being there that day. Thus he refers to a present God, and to the fulfilled promise of this risen Jesus, that no one should set upon him to hurt him, &c., (vs. 17; ch. 22: 21.) ¶ *I continue*—I have stood—kept my ground and continued—held on in my course—witnessing—(bearing witness) according to his commission, (vs. 16,) both to small and great—both to those of lowest rank, as well as to this highest court and these chief dignitaries, ch. 25: 23. ¶ *Saying nothing beyond* (outside of) the things which both the Prophets spoke of as about to come to pass—and Moses, the beginning of the

a Luke 24: 26,  
46.  
b 1 Cor. 15: 20.  
Col. 1: 18.  
Rev. 1: 5.  
c Luke 2: 32.

d 2 Kings 9: 11.  
John 10: 20.  
1 Cor. 1: 23,  
and 2: 13, 14,  
and 4: 10.

23 \*That Christ should suffer, *and* <sup>b</sup>that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and <sup>c</sup>should shew light unto the people, and to the Gentiles.

24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, <sup>d</sup>thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Prophets, who recorded the first Gospel promise, and with whom Christ began when He expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself, (Luke 23: 27,) and that Moses, too, whom they boasted. This he declares in the face of their accusation that he "taught the Jews who were among the Gentiles to forsake Moses," ch. 21: 21.

23. *That Christ should suffer*—lit., *if* (that is, *whether—as to whether*) *Christ is (was to be) one who could suffer—a sufferer, &c.* These were the points he was wont to discuss. The Jews obstinately denied that the Messiah could die, and hence they denied that He could rise. They were so at a loss to understand the prophecies about the sufferings of the Messiah, that they came at length to invent the theory of two Messiahs—the one a conquering, and the other a suffering one. The cross of Christ was to the Jews a stumbling-block—an offense. Christ opened the understanding of the disciples to understand the Scriptures, that thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day. Luke 24: 45, 46. And so He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, beginning at Moses, and passing through all the Prophets, the things concerning Himself to this very effect, that Christ (the Messiah of their Scriptures,) ought to (must needs) have suffered these things and enter into His glory. Luke 24: 25, 26, 27. ¶ *And that he should be the first*—lit., *whether first from the resurrection of (the) dead (ones) he is about to proclaim light to the (Jewish) people and to the (Gentile) nations.* This point of Christ's resurrection was, of course, immediately connected with that of His death; and the question was whether this was the predicted office-work of the Messiah, to die and rise again as first of all—"the first fruits

of them that slept," (1 Cor. 15: 20,) rising in order to raise others—His resurrection being the pledge of the glorious resurrection of all His people. Here Paul claims to be an adherent of the ancient faith, and of the great vital doctrine (which Christ Himself set forth,) that the Messiah must needs suffer in order to conquer, and must die in order to abolish death, and to rise and reign as the representative of His people; and that thus He brings life and immortality to light through the Gospel, (2 Tim. 1: 10.) So Jesus is called the *first-born from the dead*, Col. 1: 18; Rev. 1: 5; See Isa. 42: 6; 49: 6; 60: 1, 2, 3; Luke 2: 32; 13: 47. He was the first who was raised from the dead to immortal life, Ps. 16: 10, 22, 32; Isa. 53: 10. Lazarus and others were raised miraculously, and many bodies of the saints that slept arose and came out of their graves *after His resurrection*, Matt. 27: 53. Hence He was the first fruits of the risen dead—as the first ripe stalks of the grain were presented at the Passover as a pledge and earnest of the great harvesting that was to follow. These were the points which Paul maintained, and in so doing he showed himself true to the ancient faith, as set forth in their Scriptures.

24. *As he thus spake*—literally, *he defending* (urging in his defense) *these things.* The impression which Paul's defense made upon the wily, politic Festus, as a mere man of the world, is here given. The doctrine of the resurrection led some of the Athenian newsmongers to mock; and it leads this Roman politician to charge the Apostle with madness. While the doctrine of Christ crucified is to the Jews a stumbling-block, it is also to the Greeks foolishness. That this Jesus should claim to be the enlightener of the pa-

25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely : for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him ; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets ? I know that thou believest

tions is also hooted at as insanity itself. Literally, *thou art mad—the much learning* (the many letters) *is perverting thee to madness*—turns thy brain, as we say. Paul's eloquent and learned citations of the Jewish Scriptures, and his earnest maintenance of his points, made this impression upon Festus, that he was gone mad with these questions—that they had turned his head. The great doctrines of Christianity seem to the mere worldling like jargon, and the earnest enforcement of them, like insanity. But to them that are saved, whether Jew or Greek, this Gospel truth is the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. 1 : 24.)

25. Paul most calmly, but positively replies, *I am not mad*, as you allege—and then showing his composure, adds, *most noble Festus*, (as we would say, "your excellency,")—*but words of truth and soberness I am speaking out*. The term "*soberness*" (sound-mindedness) is opposed to the *madness*, or insanity with which he is charged. *Words* (utterances) *of truth and soberness* are in direct contrast with words of raving insanity. They are not any thing but truth and the sober truth unexaggerated, springing from, and expressing what is true, and in "*the spirit of a sound mind*." 2 Tim. 1 : 7.

26. Turning from this railing of Festus, Paul appeals to Agrippa, before whom he stood for a hearing. Agrippa was conversant with the Jewish affairs, and knew of the Christian name, (vs. 28,) and Paul appeals to his knowledge of these facts, and Agrippa did not deny. This would seem a strong evidence of the truth of Christianity. The Christian religion is based on great historical facts, respecting a Person—His life and death and resurrection and ascension—His doctrines

and miracles, predictions, &c. And Paul appeals with confidence to one who was so well versed in the affairs of the Jews, was the guardian of the temple, &c., that he knew of these facts, and he gives this as a reason for his freedom of speech, that he would be understood by Agrippa—before whom he was making his defense, and not before Festus—literally, *to whom, also, I discourse, using all freedom of speech*. This Paul had suggested at the outset, (vs. 3,) as the privilege of his position in standing now before Agrippa, one who could understand him, and the facts and customs to which he should refer—for *that any of these things is hidden from him, I do not believe, for this thing was not done in a corner*—but openly and in the Jewish capital, and on the most public occasion, when representatives of all quarters were assembled at the great national feast. So the Apostles appeal to the chief cities of the world for the truth of the miracles which they wrought among them. Therefore, though Festus, a Gentile and alien, might pronounce his doctrine an insanity, he would appeal to the king himself, before whom he was making his defense, to say whether these facts could be denied.—How many living witnesses are there for the truth of Christianity to whom we may always appeal, against the insane ravings of skeptics who call the Christian *mad*.

27. Paul having thus appealed indirectly to Agrippa as to his knowledge of the facts, now directly appeals to him as to his belief of the prophets on the faith of a Jew. Thus with consummate skill he starts the question and at once assumes it as of course. And thus he holds the king to an admission of the great truths of Christi-

28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

• 1 Cor. 7:7.

29 And Paul said, • I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor and Bernice, and they that sat with them :

anity, which are based on a belief in the prophets, which as a Jew he must of course receive.

28. Agrippa being thus pointedly appealed to, on the ground of his belief in the prophets, which might be assumed, as it was fundamental to his religion as a Jew—replies, admitting the impression which Paul's discourse had made upon him. *Almost*—literally, *in a little*. Tyndale and Cranmer read, "*Somewhat thou bringest me in mind for to become a Christian.*" And this may be the sense—*slightly* you are inducing, persuading me. In the only other passage where this phrase occurs it means *briefly, summarily*, Eph. 3:3. And here also this may be the sense. Agrippa feels himself hard pressed by Paul's arguments, and finds that he is in a sort held by his faith in Judaism to admit Christianity. He cannot deny his religion—he is not prepared to admit these inferences from his belief in the prophets. Festus scoffs and Paul insists, and Agrippa thus suddenly thrust into such a dilemma, can do nothing but protest against being drawn so *summarily* into an admission of the Christian system. He sees where all this close pressure of Paul's argument is carrying him, and he cries out, *You are summarily persuading me* (attempting to persuade me,) *to become a Christian*. As though he had said, "You are crowding me to this conclusion, which I am not yet prepared to accept." Paul was thus shutting him up to the faith, as if in spite of himself, and in a sort compelling him to embrace the Christian faith, as a necessary consequence of Judaism and as the proper fulfillment of the prophets. And just at this point, where he ought to have believed, but would not, he can get no relief except by dismissing

the subject. Agrippa sees that Paul is aiming at the practical end of converting his hearers to Christianity, and he feels the striking appropriateness and force of his positions.

29. Paul takes him up at this half way confession, however spoken, and replies, *I would* (I could pray) *to God that*—(literally, *both in little and in much*), *both in brief and at length*, persuaded,—(whether summarily or lengthily persuaded) *not only thou, but all they who hear me this day, might become (Christians) such as I am, excepting these bonds*. Or it may mean that (both in little and in much,) *both partially and largely*, all might become as he was, *excepting these bonds*, (which, as he pleaded, he held up to view—chained as he probably was to the soldier who guarded him, ch. 12:6; 20:34; 21:33; 28:20.) This Christian magnanimity, wishing those who unjustly confined him nothing but good, wishing them everything but evil—is a splendid specimen of the true Christian spirit even in chains. So able to give a reason of his hope—so bold, calm and convincing in his defense of the truth—so earnest and tender in enforcing it, and yearning so at heart for the salvation of his persecutors, Paul wins a glorious victory. And this last and fullest vindication of the Christian cause in the face of Jewish and Gentile dignitaries, before he quits the Holy Land for the metropolis of the heathen world, will stand on record wherever the Gospel is preached, (like Mary's anointing,) as a memorial of him.

30. *And he having spoken these things*. Paul had thus reached his conclusion, and nothing could have been a happier close than such a rejoinder. One would think such last words must have gone

31 And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying; 'This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. f ch. 23: 9, 28, and 25: 23.

32 Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, \* if he had not appealed unto g ch. 25: 11. Cæsar.

deeply to the very soul of those who heard them. The King Agrippa, however, could endure this direct and personal appeal no longer. He rose first, and at the signal, the rest, in their order of rank as here given, would naturally follow. It is related by historians that this Agrippa was so far conciliated toward the Christians, that he granted those of them who fled into his territory during the Jewish wars, leave to remain and worship unmolested.—*Dan. Brenius.* ¶ *The governor*—ch. 23: 26. ¶ *Bernice*—sister of Agrippa, ch. 25: 13. ¶ *They that sat, &c.*—*Assessors*, chief captains and head men of Cesarea, ch. 25: 23.

31. *Gone aside.*—These dignitaries *having withdrawn* from the judgment-hall, leaving the prisoner and his guard, and any others present, so as to confer together in reference to the case, and obtain the counsel of Agrippa, which Festus sought—*they talked with one another, saying, This man is doing nothing worthy of death or of bonds.* Thus again Paul is pronounced innocent. As his former judges have also declared so, and now this last and chiefest hearing has resulted in the same verdict of innocence. This reminds us of our Lord, of whom even Pilate, and Judas, and the thief on the cross testified, *this man hath done nothing amiss.*

32. Agrippa's opinion is now formally given, though there had been no judicial trial, only a full hearing of the case. ¶ *This man might have been set free,* (released from confinement,) *if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.* This was as much as to say, (1) That he had been unjustly kept in confinement, for he had done, and was doing, nothing worthy of death or of bonds, (chains,) and (2) That he might have been set free at any time before he made a

formal appeal to Cesar—that is, while he was held by Festus, and while, as Festus knew, nothing was proved against him. This verdict of Agrippa, therefore, is a virtual condemnation of Festus. And yet he had invited the counsel of Agrippa in his embarrassment on this very point, because he ought not to send Paul up to Cæsar's court as a prisoner, and yet have no definite crimes to table against him, ch. 25: 27. He himself had also confessed his innocence, ch. 25: 18. And now Agrippa gives it as his opinion, that there are no crimes to be charged against the prisoner, and that Festus might have released him before his appeal, and just when he was scheming to give Paul over to his enemies for a trial at Jerusalem. It is Festus that is condemned, and Paul that is vindicated. The prisoner is set free at the bar of equity and truth, and the governor is held a prisoner at the court of conscience and of God. *NOTE.*—Agrippa pronounces that Paul might have been set free but for his appeal. But we shall see that rather he might have been set free, but for his greater work he has yet to do, in chains, at the court of *Nero*, on the Palatine Hill, in the metropolis of the Gentile world.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

§ 39. PAUL SETS SAIL FOR ROME—IS SHIPWRECKED AT MALTA, BUT ARRIVES SAFELY. A. D. 60. Ch. 27: 1-44.

The Apostle of the Gentiles has now fulfilled his witness-bearing work in the land of Israel, and has proved the faithfulness of the Risen Jesus, that none should set upon him to hurt him. He is even now, at length, about to fulfill the Divine plan and his own cherished desire, and by strange providence



## CHAPTER XXVII.

• ch. 25: 12, 25.

1 AND when \*it was determined that we should sail into Italy, they delivered Paul and certain other prisoners unto *one* named Julius, a centurion of Augustus' band.

• ch. 19: 29.

2 And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia: *one* <sup>b</sup>Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

ces, is setting out for Pagan Rome, the metropolis of the world and of heathendom. The hinderances in his path all along prove helps; and storms and seas cannot destroy him whom God has appointed to a work beyond the seas. Neither the virulence of enemies nor the poison of vipers can kill him till his work is done. The narrative here given of the voyage has been most minutely scrutinized in the light of the latest nautical and geographical researches. *James Smith, Esq.*, an English writer, availed himself of a winter's residence at Malta to investigate whatever belongs to the history of the shipwreck, and has also brought to light from ancient records of Mediterranean voyaging, the most wonderful confirmation of the narrative, as regards the localities, antiquities of navigation, winds, customs, &c. Even the soundings of St. Paul's Bay, as furnished by *Capt. Smyth* of the British Navy, have furnished a remarkable contribution to the accuracy of the narrative. We do not, indeed, require such proofs. But we adore the wonderful providence of God that brings forward from all sources such ample and indisputable confirmations of His Inspired Word.

1. *And when it was determined*—lit., *decided for our sailing*, fixing the time and the arrangements such as are mentioned here. The decision to send Paul to Rome had been made before, ch. 25: 12. It is to be noted that here the historian Luke again includes himself in the narrative ("*we*," ) for the first since ch. 21: 18—he having probably remained as a companion of Paul during the interval. Aristarchus was also allowed by Festus to accompany him, (vs. 2.) The term rendered "*sail*"

means strictly, *sail away*—"set sail," as we say. It is a nautical term, and occurs also ch. 13: 4; 14: 26; 20: 15. *Milford* remarks that "the use of oars, so prevalent in Grecian navigation, is so little known in our seas—that *to sail* is our only general term for going by sea." ¶ *Into Italy*—rather, *unto Italy*. ¶ *They delivered*—(it is not said who, but is meant impersonally to express the general idea that it was done by those having it in charge)—*Paul and certain other prisoners*, (whether Christians or no, is not said, but possibly including some such.) It was common to send prisoners from Judea to be tried at Rome. *Josephus* tells us that "Felix sent to Rome several priests of his acquaintance, honorable and good men, to answer for themselves to Cæsar." ¶ *Julius*. It is held by many that this cohort of which he was the centurion, was a division of the Roman army stationed at Cesarea. Some identify it with the Italian band, ch. 10: 1, though it is here called by a different name; and this name, *the Augustan*, was given to several legions of the Roman army, though it is not necessary to suppose that any one of these was stationed at the East. *Tacitus* speaks of Nero's body-guard as having received this title of Augustans about this time, A. D. 60, with the rank of centurion.—*Tac. Ann.* xiv. 15. Julius may have been one of these, who had been sent by Nero on some commission to the East and was returning to Rome. Or the term *Augustus'* may simply mean *the Emperor's*.

2. *Entering into—going aboard*. ¶ *Ship of Adramyttium*. This was a merchant vessel belonging to Adramyttium, a sea-port of Mysia, in Asia Minor, opposite the isle of Lesbos. It was rare

3 And the next *day* we touched at Sidon. And Julius  
 \* courteously entreated Paul, and gave *him* liberty to go <sup>c ch. 24: 23, and</sup>  
 unto his friends to refresh himself. <sup>28: 16.</sup>

4 And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under  
 Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

to find a vessel bound from Palestine to Italy. The common mode therefore was to embark in a vessel bound to one of the ports of Asia Minor, and there again take merchant ship for the remainder of the voyage. This vessel took them to Myra in Lycia, and here they took an Alexandrian vessel bound to Italy. So they did on the voyage from Philippi to Syria, ch. 20: 6 to 21: 7. ¶ *We launched—put off* (to sea)—*meaning, &c.—lit., being about to sail.* This term is connected in some editions with the vessel and in others with the people, and may mean either to denote the course the vessel was to take, or the course the ship's company proposed. ¶ *To sail by the coasts—lit., to coast along* (touching at) *the (chief) ports of* (Proconsular) *Asia.* Aristarchus was possibly a passenger, as we find him a fellow prisoner of Paul at Rome, Col. 4: 10, (see ch. 19: 29; 20: 4,) or he may have freely shared Paul's confinement.

3. *The next day we touched.* This means, *we "came to" at Sidon*—the opposite of *put off*. As they doubtless set sail from Cesarea, the port of Syria, they made sixty-seven miles to Sidon, the Phenician city which lies north-east along the coast. The mode of navigation would lead them to hug the shore, and judging from the favorable distance they made, we infer that the wind was fair for that port. Besides, the westerly wind is that which prevails there in summer. It was their plan, also, to touch at the chief ports, and they probably carried on a coasting trade. We find them making some little delay at Sidon. ¶ *And Julius* (lit.), *using Paul philanthropically, indulged him going to his friends to obtain (their) care.* This centurion thus kindly treats Paul throughout, and may have listened to his last defense among the dignitaries at Cesarea. He was, at any rate, favorably disposed toward

him. *The friends* of Paul at Sidon were Christian brethren there, as the Gospel was preached at Phenicia, ch. 11: 19, and there were brethren at Tyre, ch. 21: 3. The term denotes rather *personal friends*, who were also doubtless Christians, and who would probably furnish him such outfit for the voyage as he would require. Sidon is now a missionary station of the American Board, where Dr. Thomson, author of "*The Land and the Book*," labors. It lies twenty or thirty miles north of Tyre, and is commonly mentioned in the New Testament in connection with it, and it is the more ancient city of the two, "the border of the Canaanites," Gen. 10: 19. Dr. Thomson gives the present population as from nine to ten thousand, of whom six thousand eight hundred are Moslems and three hundred Jews. *Old Sidon* is marked by a round fort on the hill, and presents a fine view from the south, as it juts out into the sea with the white buildings. As we entered the city from Beirut, we passed through a narrow street crowded with dirty bazaars—one-story, cupboard-looking shops of silk, tobacco, &c. Men were reeling silk and drying nets along the sea-beach, and the country toward Tyre lay in beautiful slopes, well cultivated with gardens of mulberry, fig, and flowers.

4. *And when we had launched—lit., having put off from thence we undersailed Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.* Some understand it that they sailed under, or south of Cyprus, but in nautical language it means rather, that they sailed under the lee, or leeward of Cyprus, so that the island was between them and the wind, and thus they were sheltered. This makes the reason good for taking the inner course. Besides, the next verse states this to have been their course, as the sea of

5 And when we had sailed over the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we came to Myra, *a city of Lycia*.

6 And there the centurion found a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy; and he put us therein.

7 And when we had sailed slowly many days, and scarce were come over against Cnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed under || Crete, over against Salmone;

Cilicia lies between Cyprus and the main land. An additional reason is brought to light in the fact, that a strong westerly current prevails here, which would give them some headway even with an adverse wind. They sailed, therefore, to the north from Sidon, passing to the east of Cyprus, so as not to run in the face of the west wind in the more direct course for Myra. In pursuing this route, (says Smith,) they acted precisely as the most accomplished seamen of the present day would have done in similar circumstances: by standing to the north till they reached the coast of Cilicia, they might expect when they did so, to be favored by the land breeze, which prevails there during the summer months, as well as by the current.—*Voyage and Shipwreck of Paul*, p. 27, 28.

5. *Sailed over*—rather, *sailed through* (the length of) *the sea of Cilicia and Pamphylia*. This defines the track of the vessel as above stated. (*See Map*.) About the first of May, we passed by steamer from Beirut along the southern coast of Cyprus, having it in sight, and making the direct fair-weather course to Rhodes, very nearly in the direction which this vessel would have taken with favoring wind, and in the very course which Paul actually took from Patara to Tyre, ch. 21 : 3. ¶ *We came to Myra*—*we arrived at Myra*, a city on a rock about twenty furlongs from the sea-coast of Lycia, marked by extensive ruins, among which are a vast amphitheatre and splendid tombs. It is the first, therefore, of the places in Asia, which the vessel was to touch at, and it was in constant commercial intercourse with Egypt and Italy.

6. *And there the centurion having found*

*an Alexandrian ship sailing unto Italy, &c.* Egypt was at that time one of the great granaries of Rome, and the trade was either carried on directly or by way of Asia Minor. This was one of the wheat vessels of large size, and strongly built for the Mediterranean trade. It is conjectured that this ship may have been driven off her direct course by the same contrary wind as above mentioned, and that it may have put in at Myra in order to take the westward current and land-breeze, which would favor it as they did Paul's vessel. But with the west winds which prevail in that sea, ancient ships without a compass and not used to work to windward, would naturally stand to the north till they made the coast of Asia Minor with its bold shore and good harbors. The vessel was not out of her course, therefore, even if she had no need to touch at that important port for trading purposes. This ship was *sailing unto Italy*—bound thither and, perhaps, just about to sail. ¶ *And he* (the centurion) *put us therein*—put us aboard. Vessels at this time constantly ply between Alexandria and the ports of Asia Minor and the Ægean Sea.

7. *And* (literally,) *in sufficient days, slowly sailing and with difficulty having come over against Cnidus*. The same adverse westerly wind prevailing, they could only crawl along, hugging the shore for the land breeze, and rounding the Carian peninsula toward Cnidus, at the mouth of the Ægean. The distance from Myra to Cnidus is one hundred and thirty miles, and with a fair wind could have been made in a day; whereas, at this slow rate of sailing against the wind, it took them *many days*. Smith has shown that with north-west winds the ship

8 And hardly passing it, came unto a place which is called, The Fair Havens; nigh whereunto was the city of Lasea.

9 Now when much time was spent, and when sailing was now dangerous, <sup>d The fast was on the tenth day of the seventh month. Lev. 23: 27, 29.</sup> because the fast was now already past, Paul admonished them,

10 And said unto them, Sirs, I perceive that this voyage will be with || hurt and much damage, not only of || Or, injury. the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

could work up from Myra to Cnidus, because until she reached that point she would have the advantage of a weather shore, smooth water and a favoring current; whereas, at Cnidus that advantage ceased, as the coast thence rounds northward. Unless, therefore, she had put into that harbor and waited for a fair wind, her only course was to run under the lee of Crete, in the direction of Salmone, the east extremity of the island. Here then the difficulty is stated—*the wind not suffering us*—(not permitting us to proceed on the direct course from Cnidus—the Syriac adds, *to go a straight course*,) *we undersailed Crete*, (the same term as vs. 4)—sailed under shelter of Crete, to leeward of the island. Crete is the famous island of a hundred cities, where Titus labored, and whose inhabitants are described by Paul, (Titus 1: 12.)

¶ *Over against (in the direction of) Salmone*, making for this east headland of the island. So that from Myra their course would be nearly due south, a little west, taking the wind aside or across their bow, whereas by going on a direct course from Cnidus to Italy they would have had it “dead ahead.” We experienced the same north-westerly gales in March, steaming from Malta to Alexandria—the sky clear—the sea short and chopping, and the gale on our stern almost lifting our French mail steamer out of water, especially up and down in Adria where the two seas, the Adriatic and Mediterranean, met.

8. *And*—literally, *passing it* (coasting it) *with difficulty*, (on account of the contrary wind,) as now they would be in the same position respecting the wind as on the coast of Asia, and they were trying to get along westward un-

der the lee (south) shore of Crete—we came un/o a certain place called Fair Havens, the harbor nearest to Cape Matala. Beyond this cape the shore rounds north-west, exposing them to the contrary gales. Now, after this sort of tacking up around Cyprus and down along Crete, they find themselves nearly on the direct route of the vessel from Cesarea to Italy, as they would have coursed, but for the adverse wind referred to. The harbor which they have now reached is well known to ancient and modern navigation, and *nigh to it was the city Lasea*, of which it was the seaport. Like other cities of the coast, it was located inland, and not upon the sea, for fear of piratical descents. Recent travelers (1856) find this name applied by the natives to the site of an ancient town on the coast, about five miles east of Fair Havens.

9. *Now*—literally, *but much time having elapsed*, (since leaving Cesarea, or, at the anchorage,) *and the sailing (or voyage) being now dangerous*—the season being so much further advanced than they had anticipated at their departure, *because the fast* (of expiation, Oct. 10,) *had now already past*—whereas they had expected to arrive in Italy before this stormy season of the year. Navigation was commonly suspended from the middle of October to the middle of March, to avoid the equinoctial gales and the wintry storms and clouds which would prevent nautical observations. ¶ *Paul admonished*—exhorted them against continuing the voyage, vs. 10.

10. *I perceive*—this is not spoken by inspiration, but on his own conviction, though this was Divinely prompted more or less, and his judgment was borne out by the result—that the voy-

11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul.

12 And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, the more part advised to depart thence also, if by any means they might attain to Phenice, *and there to winter; which is an haven of Crete, and lieth toward the south-west and north-west.*

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained *their* purpose, loosing *thence*, they sailed close by Crete.

*age is about to be with violence, (of the winds and waves,) and much loss not only of the freight and of the vessel, but also of our lives.* This language may mean only the great risk of property and life involved in the prosecution of the voyage at that time. He wished to persuade them to winter there, or at least to induce the centurion to sojourn there with those in his charge until the better season.

11. *Nevertheless, the centurion believed the helmsman and the owner of the ship.* According to the custom of that time, the helmsman managed the ship, and was the captain. The owner often went with the vessel and received for his share of the profits the money paid for passengers and freight, while the owners of the cargo hired the helmsman and mariners. The officers and sailors would be thought better authority in navigation than Paul. The centurion was not a convert at this time. And both ship and cargo were lost to the owners by not following Paul's positive advice, "which could be supported even on natural grounds."

12. What the others advised is here stated. *The haven being not well located for a winter station, (though called Fair Havens, and for the most part possibly so found,) the majority advised to depart (put off) thence also, (from Fair Havens to a still farther and better point,) if by any means they might be able, reaching unto Phenice to winter.* This is a port on the south-west coast of Crete, now called Lutro, a haven of Crete, looking down (or toward) Lips, and down Corus—in the direction or course of these winds, (the south-west and north-west winds,) toward which they blow, and thus sheltered

from them. The harbor then would open to the north-east and south-east, and this agrees with the site of Lutro. This however, is disputed by some, who contend that the courses referred to are those *from* which the winds blew, (from south-west and north west,) and that the harbor looking out toward these points must have faced the west, and had the opposite shores receding from each other toward the south and toward the north; in which case the wind and harbor confronted each other, instead of being turned away from each other. *Smith*, however, shows that *Lutro* harbor looks, or, is open to, the east; but having an island in front which shelters it, it has two entrances, one looking to the north-east, and the other to the south-east. It is proved by ancient records, inscriptions, &c., that ships sometimes wintered at this harbor. The question was now, not whether they should proceed on their voyage to Italy, as it was now too late in the season for this, but whether they should winter in one or the other harbor. For shelter from the westerly gales, the latter situation would seem preferable; and we should see a reason for the choice of such a roadstead.

13. The wind just now became favorable for making the harbor of Phenice from Fair Havens. *A south wind blowing softly* would carry them along the northerly curve of the coast from Cape Matala, and therefore no wonder they were *thinking to have gained their purpose*, as a distance of only forty miles from Fair Havens to Phenice, west-north-west, would be made with a fair wind in a few hours. ¶ *Loosing*—lit., *having raised*—(i.e. weighed the anchor,) *they sailed close along, (hugged the*

14 But not long after there || arose against it a tempest-<sup>11 Or, East.</sup>  
ous wind, called Euroclydon.

15 And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up into the wind, we let *her* drive.

16 And running under a certain island which is called Clrada, we had much work to come by the boat :

17 Which when they had taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship ; and, fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, strake sail, and so were driven.

*shore of) Crete.* The south wind would keep them close to the shore, and they would not venture out to sea, especially as their course would be northerly, after rounding the cape, four or five miles from Fair Havens.

14. After doubling the cape they came out into an open bay, quite exposed to the weather. Their course, if they continued coasting, would lie first to the north and then to the west. ¶ *But—lit., after not much, a typhonic (tempestuous) wind (a typhoon—tornado) rushed down it—*(rushed down the high lands of the coast—or, as some read, *struck against her*, the ship—sometimes feminine,) a gale from the north-east, as would seem, which would produce the effect described, (vs. 16.) This wind was technically called *Euroclydon*, a name derived from *Euros*—which Smith has shown to be the *east wind*—compounded with a verb meaning *to agitate the waves*. The change from a south wind to a north-easter is a common occurrence in the Mediterranean. And the course of the wind is calculated by Mr. Smith to have been half a degree north of north-east—and it continued to blow from this point till they reached Malta. These gales are well known to modern sailors, and are called *Levanders*. NOTE.—Though this was a tornado, and threatened their destruction, it blew from the point of the compass opposite to the former, and but for the change of direction they could not have gotten westward. Many a fearful hurricane is ordered by God to carry his people homeward.

15. *And the ship having been caught, (seized,) and not being able to face the*

*wind, giving up—*(abandoning further effort against it,)—*we were borne along*—before the wind to the south-west. These corn-ships were often very large, and fitted to weather a gale in the stormy Mediterranean. One of them is mentioned by Lucian, one hundred and eighty feet long, forty-five feet wide, and from the deck down to the pump at the bottom of the hold, forty-five and a half feet.

16. As the north-easter drove the vessel in a south-west course, they neared the little island of Clrada, twenty-three miles distant, and ran under the lee-shore, so as to be sheltered by it against the wind. This island is off the south coast of Crete, and is now called Gozzo. ¶ *With difficulty we were able to become masters of the boat.* They took advantage of their sheltered position to use all precautions against the storm—the first of which was to hoist the small boat on board. They had no anchorage, and could only put head to wind and drift during this important operation. The difficulty then would be not merely in the gale, but in the condition of the boat, which, after so much towing in the sea, would likely be full of water.

17. After accomplishing this, they proceeded to a second expedient. *Which (the boat) having raised, (hoisted on board,) they used helps, (stays—props.)* These were props set under the ship's side while the sailors were undergirding it—passing strong cables under the keel from one side of the ship to the other, to keep the planks from starting. This is now called *frapping*. The larger ships carried *ropes* for undergirding in such an extremity.

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

*Jorab 1:5.*

19 And the third *day* \* we cast out with our own hands the tackling of the ship.

20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on *us*, all hope that we should be saved was then *taken away*.

21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss.

22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of *any man's* life among you, but of the ship.

¶ *And fearing, &c.* If they had continued to drive before the wind, *they would have fallen out unto* (stranded upon) *the quicksands* (off the coast of Africa)—two large sand-banks, called the Upper and Lower *Syrtis*. ¶ *Strake sail.* Smith renders this “*lowering the gear*”—lowering to the deck all the gear or rigging connected with the fair weather sails—so that every thing that could be dispensed with should be gotten out of harm’s way. This is the practice still in making ready for a gale. The storm-sail was set, and the ship was put upon her starboard tack—the only expedient for avoiding the quicksand. ¶ *And so were driven*—lit., *were borne along*. Such sail was set as the violence of the gale would allow the ship to carry. So they would drift in the direction of *Malta*, westward.

18. *And we being vehemently tempest-tossed, the next day they made*—lit., *a throw-out*—clearance—(the technical phrase for throwing overboard part of the cargo, to lighten the ship.)

19. *And the third day we cast out with our own hands* (this expresses the urgency of the case, that the passengers set to work,) *the furniture of the ship*—such as main-yard, the chests, beds, tables, and movables of all sorts, though otherwise useful.

20. *And neither sun nor stars appearing for many days, and no small tempest lying upon us.* There was no opportunity to take any observation from the sun and stars, on account of the stormy weather; and they had no other guide, such as compass, &c. ¶ *All hope that*

*we should be saved was then* (at length) *taken away*. And this despair, it is supposed, arose not merely from the violence of the tempest, but from the leakage of the vessel; and now they could not tell which way to run the ship for the shore, and it seemed inevitable that they must founder at sea.

21. *But after long abstinence*—lit., *and much abstinence from food existing*—not from lack of provisions, for they must have had supplies for more than a fortnight to answer the ship’s company of nearly three hundred persons—but rather from the neglect of meals in such an extremity, their necessary irregularity and the difficulty of preparing them, together with the damage done to the supplies by the leakage and storm. ¶ *Then Paul*, (after so much disuse of food,) *having taken his stand in the midst of them, said, It was necessary, sirs*, (literally, *O men*,) *for you—having been* (authoritatively) *persuaded by me—not to depart from the* (harbor of) *Crete, and to have gained* (saved) *this violence and loss*. As though he had said, “It was necessary for you to have obeyed my counsel, as authority in the case, which, indeed, it has proved, and not have put off from the harbor. Thus you would not have gained this violence of the storm, and loss of goods, and threatened loss of the vessel and of life,” or, “thus you would have gained (saved, spared,) this violence and loss.”

22. *And now* (in present circumstances) *I exhort you to cheer up, for loss of life there shall be none from* (among)

23 'For there stood by me this night the angel of God, <sup>f ch. 23:11.</sup>  
whose I am, and 'whom I serve,

24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before <sup>g Dan. 6:16.</sup>  
Cæsar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail <sup>Rom. 1:9.</sup>  
with thee.' <sup>2 Tim. 1:3.</sup>

25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: <sup>h Luke 1:45.</sup> for I believe <sup>Rom. 4:20, 21.</sup>  
God, that it shall be even as it was told me. <sup>2 Tim. 1:12.</sup>

26 Howbeit <sup>i ch. 23:1.</sup> we must be cast upon a certain island.

27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up  
and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they  
drew near to some country;

*you, except of the ship.* What a consolation to a ship's company in the momentary expectation of being wrecked and sunk in the sea—"all hope gone"—to hear a man of God so positively assure them thus, and on the strongest ground. The Christian alone can be sure of all the future.

23. *For.* This I assure you for the reason that—*there stood by me this night!—of the God whose I am and whom I serve* (worship)—*an angel.* The ship's crew were heathen, and Paul refers them to this manifestation from THE God—the one only living and true God—whose property he held himself to be, and to whose worship and service he was devoted. Here is his profession before these heathen, of the true religion. The heathen looked for signs, auguries, apparitions of the gods. But this is the messenger and message from the only God.

24. This is the message by the angel. *Saying, Fear not, Paul. It is necessary* (according to the Divine plan,) *for thee to stand before Cæsar;* and of course it was necessary that he should arrive at Rome in order so to do. (And, therefore, it was necessary in the Divine plan that he should appeal to Cæsar.) *And lo!* (behold,) *God hath given to thee* (as a favor,) *all them that sail with thee.* The same term is here used, as in ch. 25:11, 16, of Paul's being given up as a favor to the Jews for trial at Jerusalem. That was not in the plan of God. But so far from that, it was the plan that this ship's company should be *given up as a favor* by God to Paul. Their salvation from

the threatened death was granted in answer to Paul's prayers, as if they were given over to him as his property. So God will give to us as a favor those for whom we earnestly pray—often in direct and wonderful answers to prayer.

25. Paul now repeats his exhortation to them to cheer up, and gives as his reason the confidence he has in God, (the God whose property he is, &c.) *For I believe that it shall be,* (that the whole case *shall be,*) *even as* (literally, according to what manner,) *it has been spoken to me.* This is implicit faith in God's word, operating with others to induce their faith. The reason of the hope that is in us is this, *I believe God.* Ps. 130:5; 119:81. How sublime and sustaining is this simple, childlike trust. I believe it, because God has said so. Humphry contrasts this with the language of Cæsar in a gale when the boatmen were stunned with fright: "What do you fear, you carry Cæsar."

26. *Howbeit*—literally, *But upon some island it is necessary that we be cast out*—literally, *fall out.* Thus far Paul had learned the particulars and must trust for the rest, seeing the end was assured to him, and God had ordered the details as much as the result; else indeed the result might fail, because the details might fail. This much was made known to Paul, that when it came to pass he might feel reassured of God's plan as going forward, and take fresh confidence.

27. *But when the fourteenth night was come*—reckoned from their leaving Fair Havens, (an account of which we had



28 And sounded, and found *it* twenty fathoms: and when they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found *it* fifteen fathoms.

29 Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

up to "the third day," vs. 19,) *we being borne through* (driven about, drifting) *in Adria*, (in the Adriatic Sea, as the name was applied not only to the gulf of Venice, but also to that portion of the Mediterranean Sea between Sicily and Greece)—*about the middle of the night, the sailors supposed*—(probably from the sound of the breakers, or the casting of the line)—literally, *that a certain country (some land) was nearing them*. Luke uses here the phrase of sailors, who speak of the land coming in sight. The point of the island called Koura juts out in the direction of the ship's course, and the breakers dash and roar there with greatest violence in a storm from the north-east.

28. As this was in the night, when the approach to any coast in a storm is so dangerous, especially when the mariners know nothing of where they are, their only recourse was to take soundings and find the depth of water, so as to know whether they were nearing land. ¶ *Having sounded*, (cast out the lead and line so as to find the depth of water at that point,) *they found it twenty fathoms*. Every particular at this point of the island is found to correspond with the incidents of the narrative. The British frigate, *Lively*, was wrecked on this point, (A. D. 1810,) and at twenty-five fathoms depth the curl of the sea was seen, and no land. The soundings are found by actual experiment to agree exactly with those here given—twenty fathoms next and fifteen fathoms next, west by north from the former, directly on the course of the vessel. Smith has shown from charts and soundings the very track of the ship according to the bearing of the island from Claudia. He has also shown that up to the fourteenth night the drifting of a vessel so circumstanced, taking the probable size of the ship, and reckoning a medium

violence for the gale, would be about forty miles in twenty-four hours. So experienced navigators of the Mediterranean have testified, as Capt. W. M'Lean and Capt. Graves of the Royal Navy, the average of their estimates being a little less than forty miles a day. And according to this average the distance from Claudia to Point Koura on the east coast of Malta, would be made in exactly thirteen days, one hour and twenty-one minutes. Hence, he says, "according to these calculations a ship starting late in the evening from Claudia, would by midnight on the fourteenth be less than three miles from the entrance of St. Paul's Bay. I admit that a coincidence so very close as this is, is to a certain extent accidental, but it is an accident which could not have happened, had there been any inaccuracy on the part of the author of the narrative with regard to the numerous incidents upon which the calculations are founded, or had the ship been wrecked any where but at Malta, for there is no other place agreeing, either in name or description, within the limits to which we are tied down by calculations founded on the narrative."—p. 87.

29. As the soundings found the depth of the water to be so rapidly decreasing, (from twenty to fifteen fathoms in so short a time,) they inferred that they must be close upon the shore. *And fearing lest they should fall out unto* (be cast upon) *rocks*, (lit., rugged places,) &c. The alarm was well grounded, for it is found that "the fifteen fathom depth here is as nearly as possible a quarter of a mile only from the shore, which is girt with mural precipices, and upon which the sea must have been breaking with great violence." ¶ *They cast*—lit., *having cast four anchors out of the stern, they wished for the day*. Had they anchored by the

30 And as the shipmen were about to flee out of the ship, when they had let down the boat into the sea, under color as though they would have cast anchors out of the foreship,

31 Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved.

prow, the vessel might have swung round and struck the rocks. The ships of that day were so fitted as to anchor either by the prow or the stern. Besides, the plan they adopted was to keep the head of the ship toward the land, so as to run her ashore. The custom was to have several anchors instead of one or two—sometimes as many as *eight*. Having taken this precaution against drifting upon the rocks, with the advantage at this point of a good anchorage, they could only look out anxiously and *wish for the day*—lit., *they devoutly wished for the day*—possibly implying that the ship's company prayed to their objects of worship—the heathen to their gods, and the Christians to the Lord Almighty—for the day—and imploring deliverance in their extremity. Every one who has been at sea in a time of shipwreck, will know how to understand this. The advantage of being anchored at the stern was, that at the proper moment they could cut away all the anchors, and then have the vessel in the best position to run her ashore.

30. They had anchored to prevent the vessel drifting on the rocks, and to await the morning for choosing the best spot to run her ashore. But we see that they were full of anxiety, and were earnestly wishing and praying for the day. What the fear must have been, of going to pieces before morning, is now further apparent from this base movement of *the shipmen* (or sailors,) who managed the ship. Though this is so contrary to the usual magnanimity and heroism of sailors, yet in such extremity, such shameful instances are familiar to us all. Lit., *and the sailors seeking to flee out of the ship, and having let down the boat* (which they had hoisted on deck, vs. 26,) *into the sea, with a pretense as being about to extend* (carry out) *anchors from the*

*prow*, (or forepart of the vessel,) besides the four stern anchors, (vs. 29.) Both ends of their ships were alike. Lord Nelson anchored by the stern at the battle of the Nile, as a special nautical manœuvre. But the ancients, like the moderns, commonly anchored from the prow. The sailors now pretended that they were taking the boat to carry out the anchors at some little distance from the head of the ship—the cables being loosened. This was a very plausible pretext, and by those who were supposed to know what was needed. It was a base scheme for deserting the passengers and vessel to their impending destruction—and that on the part of those whose business it was to manage the ship. And this was the more base, as Paul had assured them that they should all be saved, and this had been already confirmed by the virtual fulfillment of his prophecy that they should be cast upon a certain island, (vs. 26.)

31. Paul now interposed to prevent so wicked and ruinous a scheme as that of the sailors for abandoning the ship. He was doubtless prompted to this by the same Spirit who already disclosed to him the results, and who manifested thus a care for all the particulars, as securing those results. Paul, therefore, was prompted to appeal to those fellow-passengers who were about to be deserted thus. He addressed *the centurion, and the soldiers* under his command. It would seem that the centurion had some control of the vessel, (see vs. 11,) as he was an imperial officer. Paul therefore declared, *Except these* (sailors) *abide* (remain) *in the ship* (instead of deserting it as they were doing, having already let down the boat for the secret purpose,) *ye* (the centurion and soldiers,) *cannot* (are not able to) *be saved*. It would seem that Paul must have had

32 Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33 And while the day was coming on, Paul besought *them* all to take meat, saying, This day is the fourteenth day that ye have tarried and continued fasting, having taken nothing.

assurance of this fact from revelation, for he had already been apprised of the result, (vs. 25,) yet along with it he had at least been informed of one particular, that they were to be wrecked upon an island. And other particulars may then or since have been communicated to him, and this among them. It was in the power of God to save them all without the agency of the sailors, if He had so pleased. But He works by means and employs human agencies. And while the result was positively fixed in God's plan, all the means for bringing about that result were equally fixed. Indeed each of these means was also the result of other means. So that it is impossible to separate means and ends in God's plan so as to regard the ends and not the means as fixed by His decree. On the contrary the means are secured by the same decree as fixes the ends; and further, the success of the means is secured by the same decree. It was therefore part of God's plan that the sailors' scheme should be defeated, and that they should be kept in the vessel by this interference of Paul and the prompt action of the soldiers. Therefore, also, it was perfectly just and fit that Paul should urge this warning in these very terms, for it was this very warning that was to be blessed with a successful result. So God has not decreed the salvation of any, in any way to dispense with the appropriate means and agencies, but so as to secure them, and their success. Men who are to be saved are "chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," 2 Thess. 2 : 13; 1 Pet. 1 : 2. They are "elect through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Therefore if any would know of their election they are to inquire in regard to the processes of salvation going on

in them, and whether they are daily being saved from sin—as an earnest of their eternal salvation.

32. The centurion and soldiers understand the precious assurance of their safety, however absolute and unqualified, as calling for this action of theirs, and they cheerfully and promptly comply with Paul's suggestion. So are we all to heed his inspired directions in the matter of our eternal salvation. We have had positive assurance that salvation has been purchased for every believer by Jesus Christ, and this encourages us to use all the means with boldness and confidence by the faith of Him. ¶ *Then* (as soon as they heard Paul's statement and direction,) *the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat*, (by which having been lowered, vs. 30, it was yet held to the ship,) *and let her* (suffered her to) *fall off*. The same term as used above, vss. 17, 26, 29, meaning, literally, *to fall out*, and implying a wreck. The boat in such case would most likely swamp in the sea.

33. *While the day*—literally, *but until that the day was about to come on*. Until the beginning of day-break—that is, in the interval from the cutting of the boat's ropes to early day dawn, but just within the day-break, Paul was engaged in this measure which was also in order to their preservation. ¶ *Paul was exhorting (them) all to partake of meat*, (literally, *nourishment*,) *saying, The fourteenth day to-day, expecting* (awaiting) *without food, ye have fully spent*, (completed,) *having taken nothing*. They had continued their abstinence through the fortnight, so as least to have taken no regular meal—awaiting some lull of the storm, or some catastrophe. The excitement and difficulty of preparing any food would account for this, as all who have been in like circumstances can understand. ~~It was~~

34 Wherefore I pray you to take *some* meat : for this is for your health : for <sup>2</sup>there shall not an hair fall from the head of any of you.

35 And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all : and when he had broken *it*, he began to eat.

36 Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took *some* meat.

37 And we were in all in the ship two hundred threescore and sixteen <sup>m</sup> souls.

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, and cast out the wheat into the sea.

not until they became cheerful, (vs. 36,) that they could take any food. It would seem that Paul urged the recreant sailors as well as the centurion and soldiers to join in the meal. How like the Gospel is this!

34. *Wherefore* (on account of your having so long abstained, and for fear of the consequence of longer fasting,) *I pray you* (earnestly exhort you) *to partake of nourishment, for this is for your (salvation) preservation*—this is one of the means by which your salvation (deliverance) is to be accomplished—for of no one of you shall a hair of the head fall—the proverbial expression for entire safety, 1 Sam. 14:45; 1 Kings 1:52; Luke 21:18. The sailors were addressed by this “good news,” which they would not believe as yet. Some would argue that the assurance of their salvation, as fixed by the decree of God, would take away all motive to exertion, and make all exertion needless. But we see how in their case it produced the very contrary effect. They were cheered, and obeyed the pleasing direction. So God’s commands come to us—to work out our own salvation, because it is God who worketh in us. First we are assured of the good news—the great salvation, and under this cheering incentive, we are urged to partake the provisions of grace.

35. *And having said these things, and taking bread, he gave thanks to God in presence of (before) all, and having broken (it) he began to eat.* Some suppose that this was designed as a cele-

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bration of the Lord’s Supper on the part of the Christians among them. But surely not, as Paul spread the meal for *all*, without regard to their religious belief or profession. It was an extraordinary meal in all the circumstances, and this “salvation” would necessarily remind the Christians of the great salvation, and call forth their special thanks to Christ. And every meal ought to be associated in our minds with the sacramental meal. For this reason, in part, was the sacred ordinance made a social meal, so as to carry our Christianity into the household, and sanctify all the familiarities of life. Paul, therefore, set the example of eating, and *before them all*, heathens and Christians, introduced the meal with thanks to God, making open profession of the Christian’s God as their Deliverer and bountiful Father. As yet they were not saved from the wreck. They had yet to get to land. The dangers were imminent. Only they were cheered by the faith that already took hold of the promise, and anticipated the full salvation. See Luke 24:30.

36, 37. *And all becoming cheerful, (as Paul had exhorted them to be, vs. 33,) themselves also (as well as Paul) partook nourishment, (as they had not been able to do for so long a time through fright and anxiety, vs. 33.) ¶ And we were in the ship all the souls (persons) two hundred and seventy-six.* This includes all who were on board, Paul and the rest, whether crew or passengers.

38. *And being satisfied, (having eaten*

2 Kings 1:52  
Matt. 10:30.  
Luke 12:7, and  
21:18.

1 Sam. 9:13.  
Matt. 15:36.  
Mark 8:6.  
John 6:11.  
1 Tim. 4:3, 4.

ex ch. 2:41, and  
7:14.  
Rom. 13:1.  
1 Peter 3:20.

39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they discovered a certain creek with a shore, into the which they were minded, if it were possible, to thrust in the ship.

|| Or, cut the anchors, they left them in the sea, &c.

40 And when they had || taken up the anchors, they committed themselves unto the sea, and loosed the rudder bands, and hoisted up the mainsail to the wind, and made toward shore.

¶ 2 Cor. 11:25.

41 And falling into a place where two seas met, <sup>a</sup> they ran the ship aground; and the forepart stuck fast, and

a full meal,) they lightened the ship, (for the third time, see vss. 18, 19,) casting out the wheat (food) into the sea. This is thought by some to refer to their ship's stores for the voyage, of which they had taken so little on the passage, and of which they had now taken all they needed. The connection would seem to favor this. Most, perhaps, understand it of the cargo, which is here called *food*, as it was, doubtless, chiefly *wheat*. In the previous lightening of the ship, (vs. 18,) it would seem that it must have been the cargo, which they cast out in part. And here it may have been the remainder.

39. All this occurred about day-break, (vs. 33,) and when the day had come, they did not surely know the land. It was no familiar coast. Though it is suggested that some of the sailors or passengers must have known the Island of Malta, yet this bay was so remote from the chief harbor that it would naturally enough have been unknown. We rode about ten miles from *Valetta* to St. Paul's Bay. Their great object, however, was now to get safely ashore. ¶ But they perceived a certain inlet (or creek,) having a beach, (a smooth and sloping shore, instead of rocks.) This corresponds most strikingly with the locality as we found it on a visit there. A ridge of rocks juts out into the sea, (as a break-water,) sweeping out in front of this beach so as to form a narrow channel, looking, as you enter it, like a creek or inlet. This ledge of rocks sheltering the bay, is so low and broken that you can see the shore of the bay from outside, and the sloping sand-beach referred to, with a rocky shore on either side of it, is clearly in view, both from the entrance and

through the openings of the rocky ledge. This was the cove into which they planned—if they should be able—to thrust forth (run ashore) the ship. They saw the favorable point, and they formed their plan. Only they were yet in doubt as to whether this could be accomplished.

40. And—literally, having entirely cut away the anchors, (the cables holding them,) they let them (the anchors) fall into the sea, at the same time loosing (unfastening) the bands of the rudders. The rudders of these ships were simply a pair of broad oars, worked through an opening—one on each side of the stern. It is probable that these had been lifted out of the way, and lashed fast when the anchors were cast out of the stern. Now when they would be needed again for guiding the vessel, the lashings were unloosed. ¶ And having hoisted the foresail—literally, to the blowing—(i. e., to the direction of the wind as it was blowing,) lit., they held (their course) unto the beach, (above referred to.) All the processes are here given in detail, and we see the absolute necessity there was of the sailors to do this work—as Paul declared, (vs. 31). “A sailor will readily see that the foresail was the best possible sail that could be set in such circumstances.”

41. And having fallen into a place having two seas. This description is answered by a spot near the rocky ledge referred to, called Selmoon Island. This ledge is separated from the main land by a channel of not more than a hundred yards in breadth. Smith remarks that from the entrance of the bay where the ship entered, they could not possibly have suspected that at the

remained unmovable, but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the waves.

42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape.

43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from *their* purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast *themselves* first into the sea, and get to land:

44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on *broken pieces* of the ship. And so it came to pass; <sup>o</sup> that they <sup>o</sup> vs. 22. escaped all safe to land.

bottom of it there should be a communication with the sea outside, and this unexpected circumstance naturally attracted the attention of the author, and served to mark the spot where the ship was wrecked. ¶ *Here they grounded (ran aground) the ship.* ¶ *And the forepart having stuck fast, &c.* The prow of the vessel, as the head was to the land, and the stern-anchors had been cut loose, would go upon the beach or the mud, with all the force of the wind filling the foresail. Accordingly it remained immovable. The bottom of the bay at this point is such as we should expect to find it from this description. A deep deposit of tenacious clay is constantly made here by the currents and the crumbling of the rocks. Driven into this mud with all the force of the gale, the prow would stick fast, and the vessel would soon be broken up by the violence of the sea dashing upon the stern. In Capt. Smyth's soundings the depth is about three fathoms at the point nearest to the mud, and this is about what such a ship would draw.

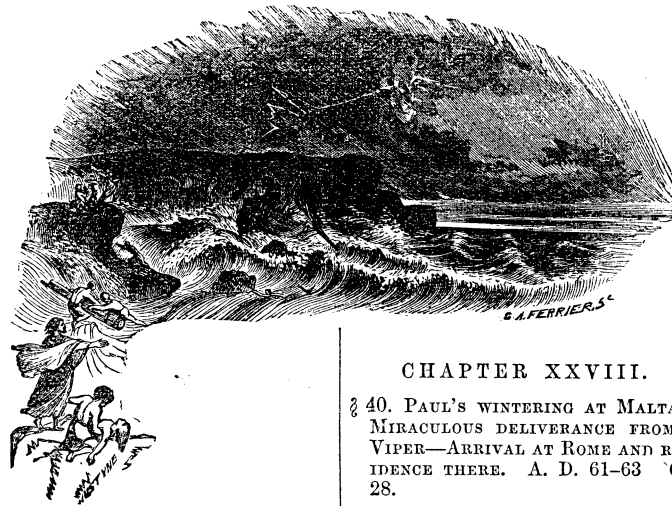
42. *And*—literally, a plot (plan, determination,) of the soldiers arose, (such a proposition or scheme was made and agreed upon,) that they should kill the prisoners—lest any one, swimming out, should escape. Such a scheme as this seemed for a moment to endanger the fulfillment of Paul's prediction, and of the Divine promise, and to put his life in special jeopardy. But all this was foreseen and provided for in the Divine plan. Let not the righteous be afraid. He that believeth shall not make haste. This proposition is also entirely in keeping with the strict

discipline of the Roman soldiers, and their disregard of human life. Besides, a Roman guard who allowed a prisoner to escape, was liable to the same punishment which would have been visited upon the prisoner. In the scattering of persons from the wreck, it seemed very likely that some of the prisoners might get first to land and escape; for though they were chained each to a soldier, they must be let go if any of them would get to shore.

43. *But.* Here is God's interposing agency whereby His plan is to be accomplished. ¶ *The centurion wishing to (fully) save Paul, hindered them from the plot.* This may have been either from an affectionate regard for Paul, or from an anxiety to carry safe to Rome this notable prisoner—or from confidence in his wisdom, as proved already in his counsel about the harbor for wintering at Crete, and about the plot of the sailors. See vs. 21, 31, 32. ¶ *And commanded those able to swim, throwing (themselves) out first (into the sea,) to go forth (emerge from the sea) upon the land.* Here was a decree of God, fulfilled in all the particulars, in the midst of improbabilities, and by human agencies, without any miraculous intervention, all parties acting in view of motives, and the result being brought about exactly as announced beforehand.

44. *And* (he commanded) the rest, (who were not able to swim,) some indeed upon (loose) boards, others upon some of the (things) from the ship—(things washed overboard, possibly oars, casks, tubs, benches or fragments of the vessel already breaking up.

masts, doors, rails, &c.)—to escape as best they could. ¶ *And thus it came* | *to pass that all were (fully) saved upon the land*—as Paul had predicted, vs. 24,



## CHAPTER XXVIII.

§ 40. PAUL'S WINTERING AT MALTA—  
MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE FROM A  
VIPER—ARRIVAL AT ROME AND RES-  
IDENCE THERE. A. D. 61-63 Ch.  
28.

and *thus* in the very way he had foretold—being cast upon a certain island, (vs. 26;) and by the sailors being kept on board the ship to manage the vessel, (vs. 31.) Thus we see that God executeth His decree for Paul to get to Rome by controlling the acts of Felix, Festus, Julius and the sailors, and by commanding the winds and waves; making the wrath of man to praise Him, and restraining the remainder. God will always make His promise good. He who rides upon the whirlwind and directs the storm, is embarked with His people, and will safely conduct them through. This ship's company are saved from the wreck for Paul's sake, their lives are given to this poor imprisoned Christian as a favor from God to him, and the God of Paul is honored before the heathen, and Paul's faith is honored. They winter at Malta, instead of at Crete, and are so far on their way to their destined port, by God's most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures and all their actions.

Paul had foretold that the shipwrecked company of nearly three hundred souls must be cast upon a certain island, ch. 27 : 31. Now it proves true, indeed; and thus far these heathen have ample ground of confidence in Paul, and in the God whom he believed and served. Thus far the Gospel is preached in all this, and the great idea of salvation, through faith in the good news, is pictorially illustrated to these representatives of heathen Rome, and all others. Now we find the Apostle still further endangered and preserved, on the way to the accomplishment of his mission—working a miracle which in itself gives an impression of his wondrous power over evil, and directs the attention of Maltese heathen to his God, as the Almighty Deliverer from the Old Serpent. So he goes on his missionary course sustained and delivered, a conqueror at every step by virtue of his simple faith in his Risen Lord, the only Saviour, until we find him at length safely arrived at Rome, where God had fore-signified to him that he

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 AND when they were escaped, then they knew that  
<sup>a</sup> the island was called Melita

<sup>c</sup> ch. 27: 26.

2 And the <sup>b</sup> barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. 1: 14.  
<sup>e</sup> 1 Cor. 14: 11.  
<sup>f</sup> Col. 3: 11.

3 And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid *them* on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.

should come—preaching the Gospel to the Jews and Gentiles at that seat of heathendom, and laying strong foundations there for the triumph of the truth in all the world by means of its vindication at the bar of Nero, in the city of the Cæsars.

1. And—literally, *having been saved* (completely—same term as before)—*then they surely knew* (as they did not ch. 27: 26—same term) *that the island is called Melita*. Some have held that it was an island at the entrance of the Adriatic, from the mention made of the ship's driving up and down in that sea, ch. 27: 27. (But see Notes.) We find a ship bound from Alexandria to Italy touching at this island of Malta on the way to Puteoli, (vs. 11,) and the course is given, vs. 12, 13. This island lies about midway of the length of the Mediterranean, and is sixty miles from Sicily, and two hundred from the African coast. It is seventeen miles long and nine miles at its greatest breadth. This island also, as has been shown, lies in the course of a vessel driven by a north-east gale; and all the conditions of the narrative are wonderfully fulfilled in this point as in no other. We found the island a solid, rocky bed of yellowish freestone. It was settled by the Phœnicæans, and was celebrated as a place of Carthaginian manufactures—cloth, &c. The name means in that language "*Refuge*."

2. *The barbarous people*—literally, *the barbarians—the natives*. They were called barbarians not as being uncivilized, but with reference to their language, which was foreign to the Roman and Greek classic tongues, (Rom.

1: 14.) All such were termed *barbarians*. ¶ *Showed us no little kindness*—literally, *philanthropy not the ordinary*. The way in which this special kindness was shown is here stated—*for having lighted up a fire they admitted us all*, (welcomed us all to it, or to their company,) *on account of the rain which fell upon (us) and on account of the cold*. This heavy rain and cold in November show that the wind was from the north-east.

3. *And Paul having collected together a multitude of sticks, &c.* Paul here, as Bengel remarks, did the office of a prisoner submissively, helping others also thereby. He is, throughout, an example of the active, energetic use of means, as prompted by his implicit faith in the Divine promise of salvation.—This was dry brushwood, it would seem, such as could be gathered up from the forest. When he laid this wood *on the fire, a viper* (the term means the venomous viper as distinct from other serpents,) *having come out from the heat*—probably in a torpid state until animated by the heat—*fastened on* (fitted to, or down) *his hand*. The Apostle was in the act of placing this heap of sticks upon the fire, (already kindled,) and probably repeated the act of throwing the sticks on the fire, when the viper darted out as soon as it felt the heat, and fixed upon his hand. It is objected by some to this locality of the shipwreck, that there are no such venomous reptiles now to be found on the island. But this is accounted for by the clearing of the forests since, and the cultivation of the island, which, as every one knows, produces such an



4 And when the barbarians saw the *venomous* beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

<sup>c</sup> Mark 16: 18.  
<sup>d</sup> Luke 10: 19.

5 And he shook off the beast into the fire and <sup>e</sup> felt no harm.

6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and <sup>f</sup> said that he was a god

7 In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

effect. The population is now the most dense in Europe—1200 persons to the square mile. The miracle was to be wrought for the heathen, and they might see in it the power of the Apostle over evil and the evil one.

4. *And as the barbarians* (natives of the island) *saw the animal* (a term specially applied in Greek to venomous creatures) *hanging from his hand*, (to which it had fixed its fang,) *they said to one another, No doubt—(literally, altogether—certainly,) this man is a murderer, whom (though) saved (completely) from the sea, the vengeance (of God) has not suffered to live.* They saw that Paul was a prisoner, and they looked upon this event as a special retribution following him. They knew that the bite was mortal, and they conjectured that so awful a death as must follow, was probably a punishment for the bloody crime of murder. This idea of Divine vengeance pursuing and overtaking the murderer was common in all ancient systems of religion.

5. *He, however, having shaken off the animal into the fire, suffered no harm*, though he would naturally have felt at once the fatal poison. It was promised by our Lord to the disciples that they should *take up serpents, and it should not hurt them*, Mark 16: 18. Here was an instance in which a venomous viper fastened on his hand in the discharge of duty, and he flung it off, suffering no injury from the bite. There is a tradition on the island growing out of this event that the absence

of all venomous reptiles there now, is to be accounted for from this miracle.

6. *They* (on the other hand, in contrast with *he*, vs. 5,) *supposed* (expected, awaited,) *him to be about to be inflamed*, (and swollen with the poison,) *or to fall down suddenly dead.* Such sudden death followed sometimes from the bite of a viper or an asp. ¶ *But while they were expecting a long while, and beholding nothing out of the way occurring to him, changing* (themselves, their position or opinion,) *they said that he is a god.* Now a murderer, now a god! So fickle is their judgment. “So at Lystra the people were about to sacrifice bulls to him, and presently to stone him, ch. 14: 13, 19. A third alternative presents itself, *He is a man of God.*”—Bengel. They concluded that he was a Divine person on account of his power over the serpent. So in truth whoever can come in contact with “the old serpent” unhurt, thus far shows himself to be a partaker of the Divine nature, 2 Pet. 1: 4.

7. *In the same quarters*—literally, *about that place, where they landed—lands* (territories) *belonged to the chief man of the island*, (in official rank.) The island at this time was an appendage of the Prætorship of Sicily, and a deputy of the Prætor would naturally have been stationed here. This title is exactly given by Luke, though it is not mentioned by other writers. Two inscriptions have been found at Malta, one in Greek and one in Latin, and in these this same title

8 And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and  
 \*prayed, and †laid his hands on him, and healed him.

9 So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed:

10 Who also honored us with many †honors; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

<sup>e</sup> James 5: 14, 15.  
<sup>f</sup> Mark 6: 5, and 7: 32, and 16: 18.  
<sup>g</sup> Luke 4: 40.  
<sup>h</sup> ch. 19: 11, 12.  
<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. 12: 9, 28.  
<sup>j</sup> Matt. 15: 6.  
<sup>k</sup> 1 Tim. 5: 17.

is used. This is a very striking proof of Luke's accuracy. It may be that the title meant simply *princeps* or *patron*, as in Italian towns and colonies, e. g. *Pisa*, &c. One of the inscriptions referred to is *Πρωτος Μεληταιων*, and refers, as is supposed, to the chief magistrate of the island. ¶ *Who having received us* (cordially)—that is, at least, Paul and his companions, and probably Julius, and not the whole crew of nearly three hundred. This could easily have arisen from what had just been seen of Paul's miracle. God's people are taken care of. ¶ *Lodged us*—(*made guests of us*)—entertained us as guests, including all the hospitalities of his station—*during three days*, until they made more permanent arrangements for their wintering in the island. This hospitality was extended to them by Publius *courteously*—benevolently, *with friendly disposition*.

8. *And it came to pass* (at this time, or after the three days,) *that the father of Publius, seized with fevers and dysentery*, (the very word in Greek,) *was keeping his bed*. Luke is noted as using in all his writings medical terms, which is accounted for from his being a physician. The disease was *dysentery* with *fevers*, (attacks and risings of fever,) and we have ascertained from medical testimony that this disease is not uncommon on the island, and was probably much more common in the more uncultivated state of the land, and when it was less settled than at present. ¶ *To whom Paul entering in, and having prayed*, (to show that he wrought the cure not by his own power, but by the power of the Christian's God,) *laying the hands on him, healed him*. It was promised to the Apostles

that they should "take up serpents," not only, but that they should lay hands on the sick, and they should recover, Mark 16: 18. In this providential opening, Paul was every way bearing witness to the religion of Christ, and acting according to his commission as a missionary to the heathen. This healing was done not by medical remedies, but by the laying on of his hands in token of a gift imparted—while the prayer was to God for the gift of healing in that case.

9. This miraculous work by which Paul was enabled to attest his profession of the true God before the heathen idolaters, was published abroad. The result was natural. ¶ *This then coming to pass—the rest, also, who had diseases in the island, came forward*, (kept coming to him,) *and were healed*. It would seem to imply that all the sick in the island availed themselves of his presence there for obtaining a cure. It may mean only *the rest* who heard of him, or chose to come. Thus was the Gospel preached to them already in a figure. "Neither is there salvation in any other," but in the Christian's God. Only this one miracle of healing is recorded among so many. Some understand that on this island it is fulfilled what shall come to pass more gloriously among the redeemed, that "the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick," Isa. 33: 24.

10. No wonder that such a general healing of their sick provoked even these heathen to gratitude. So Christ heals us, and then we serve Him cheerfully for His great love to us. ¶ *Who also honored us with many honors*—courteous and distinguished attentions—and it is supposed by many to

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried *there* three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

include *presents, gifts*, (the word sometimes meaning *price, reward*,) though it is rather in the next clause that this idea is presented. ¶ *And as we were setting sail, they laid upon (us) the things for our need*—such as the necessary provisions for the voyage, furniture, &c. for the comfort of the passage. This was a special kindness to these travelers, who must have lost all their necessities in the gale and the wreck.

11. They sojourned on the island during the winter season. *And after threemonths* (probably about Feb. 10th,) *we departed on a ship which had wintered in the island, an Alexandrian (vessel)*—probably also a corn-ship, bound to Italy, and overtaken by the same gale so as to have been driven into port and wintered there because it was unsafe at that season to proceed on the voyage. This incident so far confirms the narrative of the gale and the wreck. The *sign* of this ship—the *figure-head* carved upon her prow, (as with modern vessels,) *was Castor and Pollux*—literally, *Dioscuri*. These were idol deities in heathen mythology—the sons of Jupiter and Leda—and they were worshiped as being the tutelary deities of mariners. The heathen sailors prayed commonly to them as presiding over the deep, and as deliverers from the storms of the sea. This is mentioned, as we would give the name of a ship to distinguish it from any other, and as keeping in mind the heathenism which boasted of other gods than the only true God. To such (Gentiles) Paul was the Apostle. The *Maltese*, are of Punic descent, and speak a language which is a corrupt Arabic. In traveling through the Holy land, we employed a Maltese Dragoman, *Vincenzo Belluti*, who was entirely familiar with the spoken Arabic, and was one of the best in his profession.—This

ship wintered at the chief harbor of Valetta, which is still the port of the island. We landed there from a French steamer, Feb. 28th.

12. *And landing at Syracuse*. This city, the ancient capital of Sicily, was a place of great beauty, wealth and population, about a day's sail—some eighty miles—from *Valetta* (Malta) on the east coast. Its ruins are found near the modern Saragossa—a corruption of the name. ¶ *We tarried* (staid over) *three days*—perhaps for trade, or for a favoring wind.

13. *And*—lit., *whence having come about* (out of a straight course, either following the bend of the coast or *tackling about* for the wind, or by a *circuitous sweep*, as the term intimates,) *we came to* (landed at) *Rhegium*. It is now called Reggio, at the mouth of the Straits of Messina, on the coast of Italy, nearly opposite the city of Messina. We touched at this point on the passage from Naples to Malta, by the same route, at the same season of the year, within a few days of the same time, as is commonly calculated. The sea was smooth and calm during the entire passage. We were less than a day making the distance in a very slow French steamer. ¶ *And after one day*, (during which they tarried at Reggio for a fair wind,) *the south wind blew*—the most favorable wind for carrying them through the straits—*we came on the second day*—(the ordinal used adverbially)—*to Puteoli*—now called *Puzzuoli*. This city is one hundred and eighty miles distant from Reggio, and seven miles south-west from Naples. It required a little more than a day, and Luke uses a peculiar term to signify that it was *on the second day* out from Reggio that they arrived. This was the chief Italian harbor for Egyptian vessels, and was situated on the beautiful

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days : and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and The Three Taverns : whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

bay of Naples. The city stood on a narrow promontory of rock; and opposite it was Baiae, the place of Nero's hot-baths. Puteoli was the great and populous thoroughfare between Rome and foreign parts, and was the great emporium for the corn-ships of Alexandria. We saw the remains of the celebrated mole which was built into the sea at the entrance of this bay. At these docks the vessels discharged their cargoes. Thirteen of the piers still remain, and we could easily imagine the arrival there of "the Castor and Pollux," and the landing of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, on his way to the ancient seat of heathenism at Rome. The cargoes here discharged for the imperial city, were either transferred to smaller vessels to be carried up the Tiber, or were transported by land. We saw also the remains of a great amphitheatre, the ruins of columns, cornices and capitals of marble lying broken around—the ruins of heathen temples, as of Neptune, &c. That of Jupiter Serapis has the stone floor in good preservation, with the altar in the midst, and vessels for the blood of the animals, and baths for the heathen priests. And these were there when Paul landed.

14. *Where having found brethren, we were solicited to stay over with them seven days.* This populous port and commercial mart had attracted Jews of the dispersion, and a community of Christians had been formed here, perhaps by agencies from Rome, where a Christian Church was probably gathered by converts from the first Christian Pentecost, (ch. 2: 10.) As the centurion and his prisoners were no longer dependent on the sailing of a ship, but had now only the land journey to Rome remaining, he yielded to Paul and his attendants the privilege of tarrying over for a week. Thus they spent a

Sabbath with the Christians there, and the mention of "seven days" would seem to refer to this as the object they had in remaining this period of time. Thus obligingly did the centurion treat Paul, and no wonder, after all he had seen of him from the first. ¶ *And so—thus—by this route—by these steps and with these delays—we came unto Rome,* for which we had long before set out.

15. *And from thence (from Rome, as we were going toward it,) the brethren, (Christians of Rome,) having heard the things concerning us, came out to meet us*—(literally, *to us for a meeting*)—*as far as Appii Forum and The Three Taverns.* Paul had already written a most important letter to the Christians at Rome, and no wonder that they came out to salute and escort him. From Puteoli, Paul and his company would go to Capua, about twelve miles, and there taking the celebrated Appian Way, they would have one hundred and twenty-five miles to travel to Rome. The Apostle had now already seen some of the splendid temples of classic heathenism which were scattered so thickly on this Italian soil. He is now in the vicinity of the Acherusia of the poets—the river Styx—the Elysian fields—the cave of the Cumæan Sybil—temples of Diana, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, and baths and prisons of Nero, &c. We set out from Rome by this same Appian Way, Feb. 6th, and crossing the Campagna, stopped for the night at *Cisterna*, which is regarded by some as the ancient *Appii Forum*, and by others as *The Three Taverns*, or very near to it, on the edge of the Pontine Marshes. It is about forty miles from Rome. We took a late breakfast about noon at Albana, (ancient *Alba Longa*,) where the beautiful lake of Alban is seen from the summit. ¶ *The Three Taverns. This*

<sup>a</sup> ch. 24: 25, and 27: 3. 16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but <sup>b</sup> Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

<sup>c</sup> ch. 24: 12, 13, and 25: 8. 17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men *and* brethren, <sup>d</sup> though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet <sup>e</sup> was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

was about **thirty** miles from Rome, and a well **known** stopping place on the Appian Way. Some of the brethren met Paul at this point. We saw the canal which ran from near Terracina (a few miles below Cisterna,) to Rome, and by which possibly the Apostle may have traveled the remainder of the route. ¶ *Whom* (the Christian brethren,) *Paul seeing, having thanked God, he took courage.* The promptness with which they had hastened at the first news of his arrival at Puteoli, to meet him on the road, was very cheering. Here already he sees face to face these brethren in Christ from a Church at the world's metropolis, which had been planted by no Apostle, but by Christian converts. Here already he beheld the success of the Gospel at Rome, as an earnest of his greater ingatherings. And it was the refreshment of Christian fellowship and the communion of saints, which to a prisoner for Christ, on his way to the cruel Nero, would be most encouraging. Thus God provides for his faithful servants courage in danger, and consolation in trouble—raises up for them earnest friends among strangers **and in the midst of powerful foes.**

16. *And when we came unto Rome.* Paul has now at length arrived at his destination. He has trodden foot at length upon the street of the imperial city, whither he had longed to go, (ch. 19: 21,) and whither it had been assured to him by the Lord Jesus Himself, that he should preach the Gospel, even though in chains. Here at length he is, by the good providence of God; taking courage, as he always did, from the presence and fellowship of Chris-

tians. ¶ *The centurion*—who had been charged with these prisoners to take them to Rome—*delivered them to the commander of the camp*, where the Pretorian guard were quartered—the Emperor's body-guard. It was the business of this head officer to receive such prisoners as were brought in from the provinces. There were usually two of these chief officers, but at this time there was but one, and he was *Burrhus*, the preceptor of Nero. It is known that he held office until A. D. 62 from 51; and it is generally agreed that Paul arrived at Rome about A. D. 61. Seneca was the chief in the State department. Special favor was shown Paul, possibly by the representations of the centurion on delivering him up, possibly by the terms of Festus' letter. ¶ *But to Paul it was permitted to dwell by himself*—not confined with other prisoners—only *with the soldier guarding him.* He was allowed to dwell in his own hired house, only kept under guard by a soldier, to whom he was fastened by a chain, (vs. 30.) First of all, however, he went to the house of a friend in exercise of this liberty, (vs. 23.)

17. *And it came to pass, after three days, that Paul called together those who were chief men of the Jews.* His first appeal was to his own countrymen, in accordance with his letter to the Romans, chs. 10, 11. This was only what he had given the Christians to expect, and these chiefs of the Jews were the elders, or rulers in the synagogues, who were not converted to Christ. It was on Jewish questions that Paul would be judged, for on these grounds he had been accused by the Jerusalem Jews. **Luke records this**

18 Who, 'when they had examined me, would have let <sup>1 ch. 22:24, and 24:10, and 25:8, and 26:31.</sup> me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, <sup>m ch. 25:11.</sup> "I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see <sup>n ch. 26:6, 7, o ch. 26:29, Eph. 3:1, and 4:1, and 6:20, 2 Tim. 1:16, and 2:9, Phil. 10:13.</sup> you, and to speak with you: because that <sup>a</sup> for the hope of Israel I am bound with <sup>e</sup> this chain.

interview not as if it were the first thing which Paul did, but as the first public step which he took in reference to his trial and vindication. The Jews, though banished from Rome by the edict of Claudius, had returned under Nero, though in some fear, as the edict had not been repealed. ¶ Literally, *Men, brethren, I having done (though I had done) nothing contrary to the (covenant) people, (the Jewish nation or Church,) or to the paternal (ancestral) customs, (institutions,) I was given up a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.* Paul had all along maintained that his was the only true idea of the Jewish institutions, (the ceremonial law, &c.,) and that his was the only proper observance of the paternal religion, to regard that old dispensation as preparatory, and as consummated and fulfilled in the Christian system. Paul's statement here is mild, omitting to mention that the Romans took him out of the hands of the Jews, ch. 21:31, 32. The malice of the Jews resulted in his passing into the hands of the Romans, and they had delivered him up to the Romans, Felix and Festus, in so far as they had prosecuted his case before the tribunal of the Roman governors.

18. *Who*—the reference here is to the trial before Festus and his court—*having examined me* (in a formal judicial trial of the case,) *were willing to let me go,* (see ch. 25:8,) *because no legal ground of death-sentence was (found) in me.* This was confessed by them all—by Lysias, (ch. 23:29,)—by Felix, (ch. 24:23, 26,)—by Festus, (ch. 25:7, 9, 12, 18, 19, 20, 25,) and by Agrippa, (ch. 26:32.) It was apparent throughout that it was only the per-

secuting malice of the Jews which prevented his being set free. Felix and Festus were willing to do the Jews a pleasure, and therefore kept him bound, (ch. 24:27.)

19. Here it appears that the immediate occasion for Paul's appealing to Cæsar, was the opposition which the Jews made to his proposed release. This would seem to throw some light upon Festus' conduct in suggesting a trial before him at Jerusalem. The pressure of the Jews—(lit., *contradicting* the grounds of his release,) and his politic desire to please them, led him to make so base a proposal to the prisoner, at the very mention of which Paul was constrained (compelled) to appeal unto Cæsar, as the only course for avoiding so ruinous a measure. But lest he may here be misunderstood, he adds—*not as having any thing to charge against my nation,* (in this appeal,) only as seeking to protect myself against such certain and base destruction. He still puts forward his interest in the Jewish nation, and claims membership and fellowship in the family of Abraham, against the false accusation of those who said that he had apostatized from the Jewish Church. And he wishes it therefore to be understood, that he is at the bar of Cæsar not as a complainant against the Jewish people, but simply on the defensive—as falsely accused by the Jews, though acquitted by every Roman tribunal. Thus far he wishes to set himself right before the Jews at Rome, as his case was soon to come up.

20. *For this cause.* This does not mean "on this account," with a reference to what immediately precedes. The phrase means, *On account of this*

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

*legal accusation*—(the same term as used vs. 18; 13 : 28; 22 : 24; 25 : 18, 27; John 18 : 38,) and refers to what immediately follows—the charge upon which he is prosecuted and appeals—which he calls “*the hope of Israel*.” He wished to have them understand the real ground upon which he is accused, and in order to inform them of the precise accusation and explain it to them, he says, *I have called for you, therefore*, (invited, or invoked you—as if he would say, to take my side,) *for, for the sake of the hope of Israel* (the hope of a Messiah, attested in the case of Jesus Christ, by His resurrection,) *I am bound* (compassed) *with this chain*. Thus he has insisted on from the beginning, and he would have these Jews of Rome understand his position, that the doctrine he has proposed and preached is nothing more nor less than the ancient Jewish hope of a Messiah, as made good in the case of Jesus of Nazareth by the fact of His resurrection from the dead—that this is the Jewish Scripture, as he set forth in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans, declaring himself to be “an Apostle separated unto the Gospel of God, which He had promised afore by His Prophets in the Holy Scriptures—concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, which was *made of the seed of David according to the flesh—and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead!*” Rom. 1 : 24. Hence, of course, he claimed to be a Jew in the truest sense, and would so appeal to them that so far from being an apostate, he was an earnest advocate of his ancestral faith and institutions. From this point we look back upon the various defenses made by the Apostle from the beginning, and we see how, in ch. 13 : 32, 33, Paul in his **FIRST DISCOURSE** uttered the same doctrine in vindication of the Christian system before the Jewish synagogue, at Antioch, in Pisidia. He shows that

this is the “glad tidings,” and that the hope of Israel is *the essence of the Gospel*. “How that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again. As it is also written in the second Psalm: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised Him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, He said on this wise: I will give you the sure mercies of David.” And the Apostle cites two noted passages in the Psalms as being prophetic of this great event, Ps. 2 : 7; 16 : 10. Thus already, at the outset of his ministry, he gave the clew to all his subsequent defenses. And the **RISEN JESUS** is in his view the **Messiah of the Old Testament Scriptures**. And He is “**THE HOPE OF ISRAEL**.” And the resurrection, as illustrated and instanced in the case of this Jesus Christ of Nazareth, involves the resurrection of God’s people: all true believers—the true Israel—being the members of the body of which Christ is the Head; and of course **THE HEAD** being risen, carries along after it **THE MEMBERS** also. See ch. 23 : 6; 24 : 15; 26 : 6, 7. “Because I live, saith Christ, ye shall live also.” He is our risen High Priest according to the power of an *endless* life. Heb. 7 : 16, 17, 24, 25. So to the Athenians he preached **JESUS AND THE RESURRECTION**.

21. *We neither received letters*—writings—as epistles or documents of any kind. Nothing had been communicated to these Jews at Rome by the Jews of Judea concerning Paul. Of course they could not have foreseen the sudden turn given to the affair by Paul’s appeal to Cæsar, which would carry him to Rome; and since that time they could not have had opportunity to send the information, as Paul had taken the first conveyance to Rome, ch. 26 : 32; 27 : 1, 9. *Eusebius* states, on the authority of ancient histories, that before

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest :  
for as concerning this sect, we know that every where <sup>p</sup> it  
is spoken against.

<sup>p</sup> Luke 2: 34.  
ch. 24: 5, 14.  
1 Peter 2: 12,  
and 4: 14.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, there came  
many to him into *his* lodging; <sup>q</sup> to whom he expounded  
and testified the kingdom of God, persuading them con-  
cerning Jesus, <sup>r</sup> both out of the law of Moses, and out of  
the prophets, from morning till evening.

<sup>q</sup> Luke 24: 27.  
ch. 17: 3, and 19:  
8.  
<sup>r</sup> See on ch. 28:  
6, 22.

Paul arrived at Rome the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem sent circular letters to the Jews in all parts of the world, inveighing against the doctrines of Christ. But they had found no occasion to send any warnings against Paul himself, as there was no likelihood of his being at Rome until his sudden and unlooked-for appeal. ¶ *Neither has any one of the brethren coming (arriving) shown (from others) or spoken (of himself) anything evil concerning thee.* No messenger had come with such reports. Paul, therefore, had now given them the first account of the charges brought against him at Jerusalem, unless as some think, these Jews dissembled, because they saw that Paul was favorably regarded by the officers of State.

22. *But*—though there had come to them no written reports about Paul, nor any special messengers, in the case, they had heard about this doctrine by circular letters, as above mentioned, and they add—*we desire*—literally, *we think it right* (due to ourselves, or worth while, ch. 15: 38,) *to hear from thee what things thou mindest*, (your creed and principles as to doctrine and duty,) *for, concerning this sect, indeed, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.* It would seem that these Jews at Rome must have known of Christianity from the Church already established in that city, perhaps now nearly thirty years old, since the first Christian Pentecost, Paul had addressed to that Church his great “Epistle to the Romans.” These Jews, therefore, probably knew more than they say in their reply to the Apostle. Their language, however, is cautious, not necessarily dissembling. They knew how the Christian system was regarded in the great metropolis. And they had heard from the Sanhe-

drim at Jerusalem against it. Yet as this prisoner had come from the Holy Land, accused by that highest court of Israel, these Jews of the dispersion would feel great curiosity and strong desire to hear from him his own statement. They may have concealed their enmity to the Christian system, from a fear of being embroiled in the dispute; especially as the State officers having the Christian prisoner in charge, were plainly treating him with favor; and the Jews as a dispersed people had every reason to fear the odium of the State.

23. This civility, in response to Paul’s general statement, led to a definite appointment for a hearing such as he sought. ¶ *And having appointed (arranged) a day to him, there came to him unto his lodging* (the term implies a place of hospitality where he was entertained as a guest, vs 16, perhaps the house of Aquila and Priscilla, see Rom. 16: 3, and not the same with the hired house, vs. 39,) *many (very many) to whom he set forth, (expounded,) testifying the kingdom of God.* This is the grand leading topic with which this History of the Acts started. Our Blessed Lord had all along instructed His disciples in regard to the true nature of THE KINGDOM, and had set it forth (expounded) in various parables and by explanatory discourses. (See the Evangelists, throughout.) And during the forty days interval between His resurrection and ascension, He still spake to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, (ch. 1: 3.) And just before He was taken up, He answered their particular inquiry about the time for the restoration of the kingdom, as predicted in the Scriptures, (ch. 1: 6.) So spake Stephen, ch



ch. 14: 4, and  
17: 4; and 19: 9.

24 And \*some believed the things which were spoken, and some believed not.

25 And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, after that Paul had spoken one word, Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers,

7, and Philip, ch. 8: 12.—And this was Paul's topic to the last, (14: 22; 19: 8; vs. 31.) On this vital topic the (unbelieving) Jews were hostile to the Christian system. The Messiahship of Jesus and the fulfillment of their Scriptures in Him and His kingdom, they could not receive. This, therefore, was the burden of Paul's labors—*Persuading them, too, the things concerning Jesus*—speaking of His life, death, resurrection and ascension—of His teachings and miracles—in order to prove to them that He was the Messiah predicted by their Prophets, and typified in their ceremonial institutions. This was still, as ever, his mode of persuading the Jews. This same course of reasoning he had adopted in the synagogues from the beginning, ch. 3: 13, 21, 24; 10: 43; 13: 27; 19: 8; 24: 14; 26: 22, 27. ¶ *From the law.* So far from “teaching against the law, or speaking against Moses,” as had been charged, (ch. 21: 28,) he undertook to show, from all the Mosaic institutions, that Jesus was the Christ. *From the Prophets* he also showed that Jesus was the one who was to come, and that their predictions of the Messiah had been fulfilled in Him, ch. 13: 22; 26: 6. This he did *from morning*—lit., *from early in the morning until evening*—that is, throughout the day that was appointed for him. See vss. 30, 31.

24. The result of Paul's expounding and testifying of Christ to the Jews was the same as he had often found it, and the same as is still found among the Gentiles. Lit., *Some were persuaded by the things spoken*, (the arguments and proofs brought forward from the Scriptures, as already stated,) *and some believed not*. This does not imply that these Jews had never before heard the Gospel arguments. For it constantly occurs thus among those who

have always sat under the Gospel message—that some believe and some believe not. In this vital matter, too, parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, are separated. And they will be separated at the last day, and in eternity.

25. *And*—literally, *being discordant among themselves*, on account of the different reception of the message just noticed—probably expressing their diversity of sentiment and feeling in an open discussion—the unbelievers being in the majority—*they departed*—lit., *were dismissed*, (the assembly was adjourned,)—*Paul having said one word*, (one utterance,) as they were about to leave. Just as the assembly was about breaking up, Paul uttered one last, parting, warning word. He would apply to them in all faithfulness, out of their own Scriptures, this solemn, awful passage—if, peradventure yet they might be moved to consider and turn to God. ¶ *Well said*, (aptly, appropriately,) in application to your case, and as prophetic also of your rejection of the Gospel message. ¶ *Unto our fathers*. Here the Apostle, still claiming to be a Jew, and a descendant of their boasted fathers, applies it most pointedly to the unbelievers, showing their very unbelief to be their curse and ruin. Some editions read, on good authority, *your fathers*, and in such case Paul would seem to mean that they were the true sons of the unbelieving ancestors to whom Isaiah spoke these words. Isa. 6: 9, 10. It is declared to be the language of the Holy Ghost. The language is also cited by our Lord, (Matt. 13: 13, 14,) and applied to the unbelieving Jews of His time, who understood not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It was spoken to Isaiah in a broad, prophetic application to all ages. See John 12: 40.

26 Saying, 'Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive :

Isa. 6:9.  
Jer. 5:21.  
Exek. 12:2.  
Matt. 13:14, 15.  
Mark 4:12.  
Luke 8:10.  
John 12:40.  
Rom. 11:8.

27 For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

26. *Saying.* This was in the commission given to the Prophet Isaiah by Jehovah, (the Holy Ghost,) wherein he was charged to go to unbelieving Israel and preach, with an assurance beforehand that his preaching should be of no saving effect. Because his work should result in making the heart of the people fat, he is instructed to *go and do* that which should be the painful result of his work. Even though they should reject the message, still he had a work to do for Christ, even though it should prove to be a means of judicial hardening and blinding, as regards the people. Paul applies this discouraging language in the commission of Isaiah to his own commission as concerns the Jews of his day, and of that metropolitan city. ¶ *Say—hearing.* So does he now say to these Jewish rejecters of the Messiah. Lit., *In hearing ye shall hear, and shall not at all* (not by any means,) *understand.* All their hearing, as it turns out indeed, resulted in no true spiritual understanding. ¶ *And seeing, ye shall see and not perceive.* He would have them know that this result was also predicted in their own Scriptures, and was most strikingly fulfilled in them, as it was in their unbelieving fathers whom the Evangelical Prophet addressed. Isaiah was that Prophet whose commission it was most specially to proclaim to the Jews the Gospel times—the extension of the Church to the Gentiles—the very particulars of the transaction—the removal of ceremonial disabilities, as in case of the Eunuch, and the glorious ingathering of all people to the kingdom of the Messiah. See ch. 8, *Notes.* So Stephen cites Isaiah (63:1,) in regard to the

transition times, ch. 7:48, 50. See Isa. chs. 52, 66. Thus it often comes to pass under the Gospel that a faithful minister of Christ finds himself only the sorrowing and unwilling instrument of the people's hardening and blinding.

27. *For.*—Here it is not so much the Apostle's agency that is contemplated as it is that of the people themselves. In the original passage it is presented in the light of the Prophet's commission, so unsuccessful, as though his charge had been to make the heart of the people fat. Here it is interpreted in the light of their own debased condition. ¶ *The heart of this people* ("their mind and conscience,") *is fattened—(is stupefied)—*so carnal as if fat had gathered over all their sensibilities,) *their ears, &c.*—lit., *with their ears they have heard heavily*—with dullness. This shows their listlessness, and the stupor under which they have lost their hearing. ¶ *And their eyes they have closed.* This shows their active, positive agency in the matter. ¶ *Lest at any time*—such condition and conduct has the effect to prevent all hearing and seeing to any purpose. It is ascribed to their own action, which is such as to reject God's gracious operation. ¶ *Lest they should be converted—*lit., *should turn,* i. e., "from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." It was the substance of Paul's commission "to the people and to the Gentiles," as well as Isaiah's commission to the ancient Jews—*to turn them, &c.*; to preach *turning—repentance.* See ch. 26:16–18. ¶ *And I should heal them,* (i. e.) "that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are

v. Matt. 21:41  
43.  
ch. 13:46, 47,  
and 18:6, and  
22:1, and 26:  
17, 18.  
Rom. 11:11.

28 Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent "unto the Gentiles, and *that* they will hear it.

29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed, and had great reasoning among themselves.

sanctified by faith that is in me," ch. 26:19, 20. Such forgiveness, inheritance and sanctification as God's free gift, received through faith in Christ imparted, is this Divine healing. None other can work this healing. It is this which the Gospel of Christ proposes. And they who reject the Gospel refuse this healing of the soul.

28. Literally, *So then*—since this is your case—*be it known unto you*. The crisis has here occurred, (as elsewhere all along his ministry,) in which the messengers of this salvation are instructed to turn away from the Jews unto the Gentiles. It was the same with the Jews at Rome as it was with those in Asia Minor, (at Antioch in Pisidia, ch. 13:38-46; 18:6.) And now Paul formally notifies to them this Divine arrangement, not as a notice of final abandonment, but as "provoking them to jealousy by them that are no people." Paul saw, as he had already written in the Romans, (11:11,) that the Divine plan contemplated the rejection of the Jews for a season, upon their rejection of the Gospel offer; and then the ingathering of the Gentiles was to prove the mighty and effective constraint with them for turning to God. (See Rom. ch. 11.) ¶ *That to the Gentiles the salvation of God was sent*—lit., *the saving* (plan, or doctrine,) with its blessed effects. He would have them understand that while the Gospel has been offered first to the Jews, and they have all along rejected it, this result was foreseen and provided for from the beginning; and that THE MYSTERY HID FROM AGES has now been revealed unto His holy Apostles, and is thus in course of operation, "*that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel.*" (Ephes. 3:6; 6:19; 2:15, 16; 1. Cor. 4:1; Col. 1:26. Gal. 3:14,

28, 29. Thus Paul vindicates, by one *last*, solemn word, his commission as an APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES. Why should the Jews complain, for they had rejected the offer? And here in this Gentile metropolis, this Apostle, sent in chains at the instance of the Jews of Jerusalem, announces the fact predicted in their Scriptures, that all the ends of the earth shall see *the salvation* of our God. Isa. 52:10. Already our Lord had indicated this in his visit to the woman of Samaria, (John ch. 4)—to the woman of Syrophenicia, (Matt. 16:22.)—These are Paul's last words, as here recorded. This is the burden of his Epistles, to announce and vindicate the fellowship of the mystery which, from the beginning of the world, hath been hid in God, &c. Especially this is the great theme of some of those Epistles which he wrote soon after this in chains at Rome, as the prisoner of Jesus Christ for the Gentiles. Ephes. 3:1-11; Col. 1:25-29. ¶ *Also they* (these very ones,) *will hear it*, as the Jews did not. The Gentiles will accept the message which the Jews reject. So it had been indicated all along since those representative cases of Paulus and Elymas, at Paphos, in Cyprus. The Jew scoffed while the Gentile believed, (ch. 13:6-8.) So, also, it had been predicted, Isa. 6:9; 59:20; 60:1-4. And thus he had written to the Christian Church at Rome—of "*the MYSTERY—that blindness in part is happened to Israel UNTIL the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved.*" Rom. 11:25, 26.

29. It was as the Jews were about to depart, that Paul had detained them a moment by speaking his closing word of admonition from their Scriptures, (vs. 25.) ¶ *And he having spoken these words, the Jews departed*, (as they had already risen to do,) *having* (holding)

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 \*Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

*much discussion among themselves.* The believing Jews would naturally be debating the matter with the unbelieving, and these latter doubtless disputing among themselves—"as persons are wont (says Bengel,) who are unable to resist the truth."

30. Paul has now discharged his first duty to his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh; and has vindicated before them his own position as the Apostle to the Gentiles, in which capacity he had come to Rome "as an ambassador in bonds." On this platform he plants himself for his future ministry. Not turning away altogether from the Jews, but only turning from being confined to them, "to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Eph. 3 : 8.) The Metropolis of the World is now the seat of the Apostle's labors. Meanwhile, Jerusalem (the seat of the ancient covenant) is to be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. (Luke 21 : 24.) The historian has now completed his work, which was to trace the progress of the Christian Church from its founding at Jerusalem, and its spread among the Jews, to its transition from the Jews to the Gentiles, and to show how the Apostles were to be witnesses to Christ unto the uttermost parts of the earth, (ch. 1 : 8.) He has traced the successive steps by which it has made its way, according to the plan and promise of Christ, from the sacred seat of Judaism to the proud capital of Heathenism, the seat of the world's power and idolatry. And here he leaves the Apostle teaching in his chains, yet dwelling in his own hired house and unmolested in the promulgation of the Gospel. ¶ *And Paul remained a whole two years (time) in his own (private) hired (house, or lodging—hired at his own expense and for his own use,) and*

*received (welcomed) all who came in unto him.* This record here implies, that at the time of Luke's writing this was no longer the case. We infer that it had come to an end, either by Paul's release or by his death. He was busily employed in his apartment two whole years, cordially welcoming ALL, whether Jews or Gentiles, who visited him there. How he entertained them, is summarily stated in the closing verse.

31. During these two years, we are to regard the Apostle as waited on by persons of various classes, and earnestly carrying out the great APOSTOLICAL COMMISSION. ¶ *Preaching—(proclaiming—as a herald,) THE KINGDOM OF GOD—announcing that kingdom for which the Jews so anxiously inquired, (ch. 1 : 6,) as having already come, and occupying himself, as the Risen Master did during the forty days, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," (ch 1 : 3,) setting forth its spiritual nature and its world-wide plan—one feature of which was this, that this Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified on the charge of setting Himself up against Cæsar—was to be King of the Nations by the discipling of all nations to Himself. Thus he was engaged teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ—JESUS (of Nazareth) CHRIST, (MESSIAH of the Prophecies,)—THE LORD (of all,) and "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Jesus commanded," Matt 28: 19, 20. This he did with all freedom of speech, and (though a prisoner,) without molestation, (either from Nero's officers, or from bigoted and hostile Jews,) because the promise annexed to the Apostolical commission was fulfilled in his case—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."*

His successes and subsequent history must be gathered from the Epistles which he wrote during this imprison-

ment. It is generally agreed that during this interval he wrote

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS,

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS—  
of very similar purport,

THE EPISTLE TO PHILEMON,

THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS.

And probably also,

THE SECOND EPISTLE TO TIMOTHY,

And THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

He refers to his imprisonment, Eph. 3:1; 6:20; Philem. 22; Phil. 1:14; 2:24; 2 Tim. 2:9; 4:6-12, 16-18. Those who understand that he was acquitted and released at his first trial, and that from Rome he traveled back to Crete, Asia Minor, Macedonia, Nicopolis, Corinth and Ephesus—understand also that the Pastoral Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews were all of them written during this interval between the first and second imprisonments. It must be admitted that there are strong grounds for supposing that he was imprisoned a second time, (see 2 Tim. 4:16-18,) in which case his martyrdom must have occurred toward the close of Nero's reign, A. D. 66-68. This difficult question, however, concerns more properly the introduction to the Pastoral Epistles, (See *Notes*, ch. 19:41.) On the one side, see *Wieseler*, *Schaff*, &c. On the other, see *Alford*, *Conybeare* and *Howson*, &c.

From the Epistles, we learn that his preaching at Rome had its first success among the Pretorian guards, to one of whom he was chained—and as the guard was shifted, he was brought

thus in contact with many of them, Phil. 1:12, 13. From these the interest spread into the palace, and he soon numbered among the disciples *some of Cæsar's household*, Phil. 4:22. And it would appear that he at length delivered his testimony in the presence of Nero himself, Acts 27:24.

Thus we have seen the Church of Christ planted in the world's chief cities, with wonderful rapidity and success, against all kinds of violent opposition. From Jerusalem, hunted to Damascus, planted in Samaria, and passing to Cesarea, it passes over to the Gentiles, and the Mother Church of the Gentiles is founded at Antioch, and there the Disciples are first called CHRISTIANS. Thence it is fairly on its path of world-wide extension, and passes abroad to the Isles, to Asia Minor and EUROPE. We see it established at Galatia, Philippi, Thessalonica, (Athens,) Corinth, Ephesus, &c. till by remarkable providences it made its way to Rome. What was more improbable or incredible beforehand, on any natural grounds, than that the Church of God, once so exclusively and by the Divine ordinance, confined to the Jews, should ever pass over to the Gentiles? Yet we have seen this actually accomplished according to the prophets and in fulfillment of the prediction of Christ himself. How then can we doubt that all the glorious promises yet on the prophetic page, touching the Church of Christ, shall also come to pass?

\* John 11: 45,  
and 12: 11.

42 And it was known throughout all Joppa; \*and many believed in the Lord.

† ch. 10: 6.

43 And it came to pass, that he tarried many days in Joppa with one †Simon a tanner.

should rise up in full possession of her physical powers. She had doubtless a feeling of entire calmness and security, probably recognizing Peter as her instrumental restorer, and hence she takes his hand and rises at his motion. ¶ *Called.* He at once summoned those to whom she was so well known, to be the witnesses of the miraculous restoration. To those who had so lately lamented her death, he presented her living. 1 Kings 17: 23.

42. This miracle, like that at Lydda, was so remarkable as to become notorious throughout the city. The result was also in this case that "*many believed in (upon) the Lord,*" as in the other case, all the inhabitants "*turned to the Lord,*" (Jesus Christ,) vs. 35; John 12: 11. It was not in the power of the miraculous evidence to convert them, but God blessed these demonstrations to the renewing of their souls. OBSERVE. — These miraculous works of the Apostle of the circumcision are shown, along with the happy state of the Jewish Christian Churches, in order to lead the way to the great change now about to be initiated by Peter's vision, and also to show that all honor is to be put upon the circumcision and upon the ancient Apostolate, even though now the uncircumcision are to be admitted to the same privilege, and the new Apostolate is to go forth upon its work. See vs. 15. The true Israel is the remnant according to the election of grace. It had been expected that the Gentiles would be admitted into the Church, but only through Judaism—coming into the covenant by circumcision. But it begins to appear that it was to be a Gospel of the uncircumcision also. Stephen took broad views in this direction, and probably before Peter's vision the men of Cyprus and Cyrene were gathering the first Gentile Church at Antioch, ch. 11: 20.

43. *Tarried.* The narrative now

leads us to the wonderful event which took place while Peter was providentially, or by the Spirit, detained at Joppa. ¶ *It came to pass*—according to God's direction, and as part of the Divine plan, though not as would seem any part of Peter's plan. God had a purpose for Peter to serve by tarrying in Joppa. ¶ *Many days.* Literally, *sufficient days*—just as many as were needed for the consummation. ¶ *A tanner.* Skins are very much used in the East for bottles, as well as for other domestic purposes. The business referred to here was that of preparing skins for various uses. As it led to contact with dead animals, the business was held in dishonor by the Jews. Chrysostom takes this to be a mark of Peter's humility, that he chose to lodge with a despised countryman. The trade was held in disrepute by other nations also.

## CHAPTER X.

### BOOK III.

#### CHURCH AMONG THE GENTILES.

PART I.—*Spread of Christianity among the Devout Gentiles*  
—"*Witnesses to the uttermost parts of the earth.*" A. D. 40–44. Chs. 10–12.

§ 17. VISION OF CORNELIUS AT CESAREA, AND VISION OF PETER AT JOPPA—RECEPTION OF GENTILES INTO THE CHURCH INDEPENDENTLY OF JUDAISM.

The Gospel had now been preached by the Apostles to Hebrew, Hellenist, and Proselyte, Samaritan and Ethiopian, successively. It is henceforth to go to the Gentiles resident in Judea. Up to this point the advance of Christianity had been from Jerusalem among the Jews, through